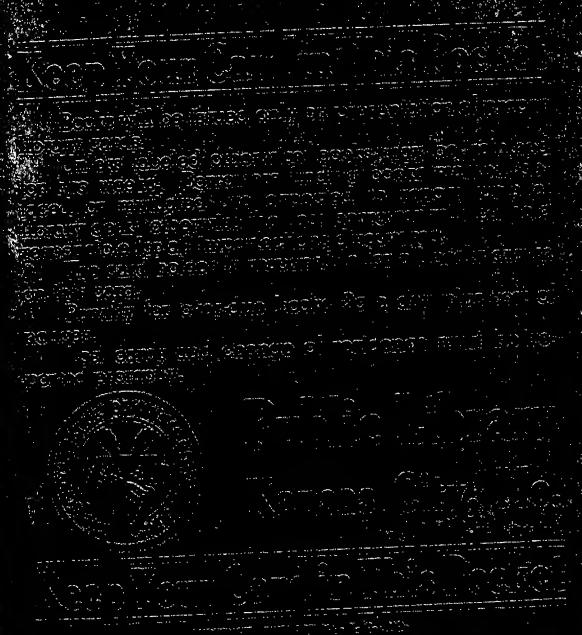


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**INNOCENTS AT CEDRO**

*A Memoir of*  
*Thorstein Veblen*

*and Some Others*

*by*

*R. L. Duffus*

*With the Advice and Consent*

*of*

*William M. Duffus*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK 1944

**WARRIOR OF GOD**

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THEODORE VEBLIN  
MEMOIRS OF A YOUNG MAN  
1907-8

## FOREWORD

I long ago resolved that I would never write anything in the autobiographical line if I could help it. I haven't been able to help it. I undertook these memoirs because I thought there might be some interest in the personality of Thorstein Veblen as it revealed itself to a nineteen-year-old boy who lived in his household for a year: the fruitful year of 1907-8, at Cedro Cottage, near Stanford University, California. Some other elements appeared as the story progressed, but Veblen is this book's reason for being. He was a great economist, a devastating iconoclast, a satirist whose dissections of early twentieth century civilization will remain as sources of delight and edification for many years to come. *The Theory of the Leisure Class* and *The Theory of Business Enterprise* are no mean monuments. But if a great man Veblen was also a man baffled and tormented. At Cedro Cottage I think he came near being happy. I wanted to show him so. I also wished to pay tribute to a kindness which I did not then fully comprehend or adequately value.

My brother, William M. Duffus, shared this experience. I have had the benefit of his notes, suggestions and generous criticisms, but he is not responsible for my point of view, or for any statement, except as is indicated in the text or notes. Had he told the story the emphasis and color would surely have differed from mine. I have tried to imagine how Veblen would have told it, but I can't.

I find that it is hard to be impersonal and objective when you go in for autobiography. This fact doesn't bother me much, for the young man whom I identify as myself no longer exists. In dealing with Veblen and Harry George, and to some extent with my father, I have done my best to produce three-dimensional por-

# WILLIAM VELEN

## *Foreword*

traits. I have not thought it wise to do the same for my brother William. This is not because I am afraid of him, either, though he is quite muscular and well-preserved. Let me add that if I had done his picture with the same effort at completeness we should still be good friends. I owe much to his encouragement and good companionship, before Cedro, at Cedro and at too rare intervals since.

This writing was done during parts of two war years. It was done in odd moments, often at the expense of sleep, and was laid aside when necessary. It seemed to me that if there were anything to be recaptured it had to be recaptured during these months or not at all. There may be some value in recalling a small part of Veblen's world, and of a young world at a time when youth did not have to go to war to justify its faith and its dreams. I hope so.

R. L. Duffus

THE  
INNOCENTS AT CEDRO



# I

In the late summer of 1907, when Thorstein Veblen first crossed our trail, my brother William and I had worked our way through the freshman year at Stanford University. William was, and still is, a little older than I. Between high school and college he had worked for the Vermont Marble Company, at Proctor, Vermont, and in the orange and dried fruit industries in California, and had done a number of other things which were perfectly legal but poorly paid. It seemed to William that if he had to work, as, owing to the state of the family's finances, he did, he might as well be getting an education at the same time. He had entered Stanford in January, 1906. In April, 1906, he had been shaken out of it by an earthquake, the same one which caused the great San Francisco fire. I had not come to California till August. I felt inferior. Every one else, including William, had earthquake stories to tell. I didn't have any.

Our first full year at Stanford together had been a successful one. That is, we hadn't starved to death or flunked out. Both of us did have measles, and I went further and had jaundice. In the ramshackle old University Hospital there was a beautiful nurse named Miss Dawson, of whom I feel that I can now write frankly. It was because of Miss Dawson, who attended to me when I was alone in the isolation ward, that I contrived to have the jaundice. I am sure I was a godsend to her, because with only one patient a nurse can catch up with her sewing. I think it was Miss Dawson who went around singing, "O Mr. Captain, stop the ship—I want to get off and walk." When I returned triumphantly with the jaundice and a high fever Miss Dawson accompanied the outraged physician to my bedside. Bending over me, she murmured,

"Poor kid!" She didn't know that I had sat on a cold, wet brick-pile, cleaning bricks, all of a rainy Saturday in order to have precisely this relapse. I would have died for Miss Dawson, but it never occurred to her to ask me to do so, and in time I got well. I never went back to that charming hospital, but after all these years I still remember the back of Miss Dawson's neck.

Our illnesses interrupted but did not terminate our extra-curricular labors. The Stanford student working his way in those days could often choose from among a variety of interesting occupations. William and I, although by nature Congregationalists, had been janitors of the Methodist church at Palo Alto; had operated a milk route; and had hacked and scraped the mortar from bricks taken from the earthquake ruins. The mortar from the newer buildings was soft, and at twenty-five cents a hundred we sometimes earned fifty cents an hour. One week we made seventeen dollars and a half and lived like kings.

We did our own cooking for a while. I remember the first time we fried bacon, and found out that if you fry it long enough you have plenty of liquid fat, but no bacon to speak of. I still possess an old account book in which we kept our records of expenditure.<sup>1</sup> I find such items as: "Steak, 15 cents"; "One pound sausage, 15 cents"; "Mutton chops, 15 cents"; "Lambs' tongues, 5 cents"; "Watermelon, 5 cents"; "Lambs' hearts, 10 cents"; "Grapes, 10 cents"; "Tomatoes, 10 cents"; "Tin god, 25 cents." Apparently we lived pretty well. The tin god was the gas meter, into which we dropped twenty-five cents every time the gas stopped flowing, provided we had the twenty-five cents. I can't remember that we ever had to eat our meat raw for lack of gas, though we did have to be careful about running the gas heater. This pay-as-you-go system had its advantages. There was no bill at the end of the month.

This was what was called batching it, to spell the word as it was pronounced. The thought was that bachelors did their own cooking, and quite a number of Stanford boys were bachelors in

<sup>1</sup>This ledger is entitled: "Gesta Duffi. Volume II." I had had four years of high school Latin, but seemingly it did not do me much good. I don't know where Volume I is. Volume II cost fifty cents. I wonder where I got the spare fifty cents, which would have bought a lot of beefsteak in those days.

this and other senses.<sup>2</sup> We learned a good deal by it, and I have never regretted having to do it. We got closer to the sources of things than some college students did, or do, and to that extent had a better education.

William and I also, but usually not in collusion, earned our way by washing dishes, waiting on table and cleaning people's houses. I learned the manual of the pick and shovel: there is a trick or two in that trade which I haven't forgotten. In fact, I was an earnest worker, after my fashion, although, unlike William, I was rarely hired twice by the same employer. Not by bright employers, anyhow. I spent all one July afternoon hoeing up infant black walnut trees on a ranch near Palo Alto before the ranch owner, who preferred to keep the trees and have the weeds hoed up, found out what I was doing.

I also tried, during vacation, to sell Underwood and Underwood stereoscopic sets to the people of Pajaro Valley, in and around Watsonville. We had been coached in salesmanship by a regional representative of Underwood and Underwood, and also by a pious undergraduate who seemed to think that our duty to God and our duty to unload stereoscopic sets on persons who didn't want any were about on a par. My gifts as a salesman were such that though the rich spurned me I could nearly always take large orders from the poor. I sympathized with the poor, and they felt it. The trouble was they could not pay for what they ordered. William said he intended to devote his life to abolishing poverty. I still think it was a good idea.<sup>3</sup>

It was during this summer of 1907, also, that I spent five days, either taking the clover out of a man's lawn or taking out everything but the clover. I am not sure whether or not I was as con-

<sup>2</sup> I knew some young men who lived in Encina Hall, the men's dormitory on the campus, subsisting for prolonged periods on nuts, dates, figs and other uncooked foods. These young men grew quite thin, and would, I think, have disappeared entirely if they hadn't occasionally been invited out to dinner. A few of them experimented with fasting for several days at a time. They grew soulful and some of them even broke into poetry. At Stanford in those days some people would try almost anything once. I wonder if this is the case today.

<sup>3</sup> William says he never expected to do it all alone. Perhaps he expected more help than he has actually had. He believes the idea was sound, and is sorry that the best he has been able to do to date is to keep himself and his family just above the hunger line.

fused on this point then as I am now.<sup>4</sup> I do know that I sat on a small box, hitching slowly around, and life seemed a pleasant dream. For some reason I was fired from this job, too. But my skill at manual labor was increasing. The householder still had a lawn.

I didn't save any money that summer. I was always fired when I was about to begin saving. Or, in one or two instances, I resigned. I resigned, for instance, when I was set to digging up a water connection in the middle of a paved road on the campus. Too much cement had been used. I felt that I wasn't getting anywhere. This may suggest a lack of the sterner qualities. I had those qualities sometimes, but not all the time. William was more consistent and persistent. He had been working in Curry's furniture store and must have laid by a few dollars. Curry of Palo Alto was also Curry of Yosemite, where he had a well-known summer camp. He was absent when William worked for him, but I do not suggest that this was why William kept his job.

Our situation was serious but not tragic. A student at Stanford paid no tuition during his undergraduate years unless, like myself, he had made the mistake of registering from a state other than California.<sup>5</sup> In that case his education cost him twenty dollars a year, plus small syllabus fees, or slightly larger laboratory fees. He could avoid the laboratory fees by not taking laboratory courses.<sup>6</sup> Board and room might cost him three or four hours' work a day, or he might pay as little as a dollar a week for all or part of a room, with a quarter-in-the-slot gas stove for cooking. The University health officer did not approve of our cooking in the same room in which we slept, but his disapproval did not at that time carry weight. The University's motto was "The wind

<sup>4</sup> William says that the man can't have wanted the clover taken out of his lawn. Who is writing this book, anyhow? I stick to my point. He may have.

<sup>5</sup> The only time I had a sense of injustice during my years at Stanford was when a committee of law professors turned down my request for exemption from tuition fees. I needed that money, and I learned then what a cold and impersonal legality can do when it operates in a vacuum. Therefore I felt a warmer glow when I first read, and later interviewed, the late Justice Brandeis.

<sup>6</sup> Laboratory courses also used up valuable time. You couldn't economize by being bright and working fast, as you could with the reading courses. You had to put in three hours' work to get credit for three hours' work. Hence my scientific background is thin, and this I regret.

of freedom blows," and it did blow. It blew on William and me when we fed ourselves, quite well, for twenty-five cents a day. I don't believe our health suffered. It was possible to get along comfortably on about a dollar a week in cash, over and above board and room, if one's tastes weren't too luxurious. I have gone for as long as a week at a time without even a nickel in my pocket and regarded the situation, since I was fed and lodged, as something of a lark. Some ingenious students made money out of laundry routes and similar business enterprises. Herbert Hoover had done that, and was later to become President of the United States. But William and I weren't going to become President, and we had no head for business. I forgot to say that William had once tried, in vain, to sell *Success Magazine* with a book of etiquette called *Correct Social Usage* in the Calaveras County area. But what he didn't earn in money he did in experience. He tells me that his visit as an unsuccessful canvasser to Angels Camp, with its literary memorial to the Jumping Frog of Calaveras, was worth while for its own sake.

We were not much worried. But in the late summer of 1907 misfortune struck our family. Our Venerable Parent<sup>7</sup> was a granite cutter who had come out to California for his health, and had been living in San Jose, about seventeen miles from Palo Alto. He and William had been together a good deal before I came to California, and had had many ups and downs. V. P. had managed to get along, but that was about all. He had never gotten far enough ahead to bring his wife and our mother out from Vermont and make a home for her in California. He never had a ghost of a chance to do so, and he must have known this long before the end. They had never been entirely happy together, my father and mother, but they had loved each other. There was some struggle in my mind, and I know in William's, too, as to whether we couldn't have made an easier life possible for both of them by giving up our ambition to graduate from college. They wouldn't have permitted it—they valued education too much. But

<sup>7</sup> This was my father's way of referring to himself. William adopted it and I followed suit. Eventually it was shortened to V. P. I think the original allusion was to Sam Weller's admirable parent in *Pickwick Papers*.

this is the sort of situation, I suppose, that has gnawed at the conscience of more than one ambitious youth. Scholarships alone would not provide against it. In a manner of speaking William and I had scholarships in our good luck and possibly our resourcefulness.

But we had to do something about V. P. Even the blossom-scented air of California won't take the granite dust out of a man's lungs, nor cure the rheumatism caused, or aggravated, by his getting his feet wet on his way to work, and then standing all day, in winter weather, in an unheated, draughty stoneshed. V. P., who had spent seven hard years learning his trade, spent nearly the same length of time dying of it. His health had so far broken down by the summer of 1907, that my brother and I decided he would have to come to Palo Alto, where we could look after him.

We could still whistle. In the perspective of thirty-odd years I can see that we had to. We had to work Pa's way as well as our own. It graveled him, for he was a very independent Scotchman from Peterhead and Aberdeen. But there didn't seem to be any other way. This meant that we had to have cash money, or so we thought until Thorstein Veblen entered our lives.

Pa didn't have tuberculosis. For some reason we were later glad to know this, as though tuberculosis were a sin. He did have bronchitis, and he coughed so much that we had to move out of the Bishop house. This was a pity, because life in these plain student lodgings had been interesting. Mr. Bishop was a retired Free Methodist minister, and, I think, missionary. He believed that the teaching of evolution at Stanford was leading the students straight to hell, and he was sorry about it. He used to ask William and me, "What would your good Presbyterian father think of that?"<sup>8</sup> Once one of the boys, in the middle of a hot doctrinal argument, asked him, "Do you believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?" Mr. Bishop never hesitated. "I certainly do!" he retorted, his gray beard wagging defiantly. Mrs. Bishop, growing elderly, was somewhat confused about things in general, but she was too kindly to wish the damnation of even the most confirmed evolu-

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Bishop thought all Scotchmen were Presbyterians.

tionist. Mr. Bishop was kindly, too, but he didn't see any way out of it.

The Bishops had a parrot named Billy. All he would say was "Pretty Billy Boy," but he said this a great deal. I can still hear him. If I could imitate parrots I could still imitate him. It was the ambition of every student in the house to teach him to swear, and if he didn't learn it was his own fault. The Bishops also had a brownish-yellow dog named Max, who had a stiff yellow mop of hair over his eyes and a dislike of students. Miss Beryl Bishop, the daughter, was a pleasant but justifiably cautious young lady. On the anniversary of the earthquake the half dozen poor but energetic students in the rickety old house arose at five in the morning, by pre-arranged timing, and, each standing in the middle of the floor and vibrating violently, managed to produce a good localized imitation of the historic catastrophe. It was a pleasure to see the Bishop family, fresh from bed, fly out into the yard, but as I look back I am sorry for that trick. They were good people having a hard time, and they meant well and did well by us.

Indeed, we didn't want to leave such congenial surroundings, but we had to go where V. P.'s cough wouldn't disturb other people. So we all three set up housekeeping on a top floor in, I think, Webster Street, Palo Alto, about a mile from the university. We had been running slightly behind on the ten dollars a month we paid Mr. Bishop for rent, but we cleared that up and managed to produce thirteen dollars (from where I don't know) for the first month at the new place. We hoped to have thirteen dollars more when the month was up. We were very hopeful—we had to be.

The new rooms had some advantages, though as we were all over six feet we had to be careful about going far away from the center of the bedroom or the kitchen, on account of the slope of the roof. But we all had good, hard Scotch heads. There was a stairway or ladder leading to a trap door opening on a flat patch of roof. I slept up there a few nights, wondering about the stars, and what was to become of us, and getting the bedding soaked with dew. It was about this time that I gave up using sheets, and

they seemed like a sinful luxury when I took up with them again.

I took an examination for postman, and was appalled when I passed at the top of the list. My competitors hadn't known how to bound New Mexico. I didn't want to be a postman. Perhaps this was an error, for I have always liked walking. And it did seem for a while that what William and I wanted to be or didn't want to be wouldn't figure much in the actual outcome.

It was at this moment that Will Camp got off his cloud and straightened things out. It wasn't that Will Camp had any intention of playing destiny for anybody. He didn't believe in destiny in that sense. He believed in economic determinism. He was a kindly, abstracted young man, and one of Thorstein Veblen's most ardent and intelligent disciples—possibly at that moment his only real disciple among Stanford undergraduates. Leon Ardzrooni, that dark, thickset, lovable Armenian, a gentle revolutionist who used later to try to shock people by going around in gatherings of mild left-wingers, muttering under his breath, "Plenty blood, plenty blood," hadn't yet arrived.<sup>9</sup>

Mrs. Veblen had just left Professor Veblen, for reasons it took me a long time to understand, and which concerned William, V. P. and me only because her departure left the Professor with a servant problem. He was living at Cedro Cottage, about a mile from the campus on the side away from Palo Alto—that is to say, about two miles northwest of Palo Alto by the campus road. The Wells family had been there for a while. Mr. Wells, Veblen said, knew more about religion than any other man he had ever met—he had tried them all, and this was quite a feat in California in that day, just as it would be now.<sup>10</sup> But Mr. Wells had moved his

<sup>9</sup> Ardz never shed any blood, so far as I know, except his own while shaving. But he was strong. I once saw practically the entire male student body of the Pacific Grove summer school trying to put him through a doorway into the classroom. Professor Howard Heath paused thoughtfully. "Ah," he murmured, "the reluctant scholar."

<sup>10</sup> One of Mr. Wells' daughters, Evelyn, grew up to be a brilliant newspaper woman. She wrote a life of my beloved editor, Fremont Older, and "Champagne Days in San Francisco." Of course Veblen exaggerated the number of her father's successive religious enthusiasms, but he was a good man, hunting for the ultimate truth.

family, religion and all, to San Jose, and Veblen, Will Camp said, needed a student to do chores around the place.

A student—just one student—would have been ample. Many a Stanford teacher's family, with one or two children to clutter up the premises and interfere with research, got along with the aid of a solitary undergraduate, who cooked, cleaned house, washed the dishes and sometimes, as I did once (but that is another story), put the youngster on its little potty at the proper time when its parents were dining out. Veblen's needs were simpler. He could have managed with about two-fifths of a student.

My brother told Camp that the Veblen opening might have interested him, but that there were three of us, my father was not very well, and he thought we ought to stick together. Camp reported this conversation to the Professor, who sent back word that it didn't matter. Two students, or two students plus a Venerable Parent, would do just as well as one student. We could all move out to Cedro as soon as we got ready. There was plenty of room.

In fact, he'd like one of us there the next night. He was going to be away over night, and he didn't wish to leave the place unguarded. Pa and William decided to have me go out first, to see if I could stand it, or for some other reason, leaving them to pack up<sup>11</sup> and follow the next day. I rode out on my bicycle after supper, just as it was getting dark. From the University campus—the Quad—I rode along a eucalyptus-shaded lane, much frequented by what we called queeners,<sup>12</sup> past the old Stanford vineyard, over the shaky footbridge crossing the dry bed of San Francisquito Creek, then up the solemn, hedge-enclosed drive to Cedro Cottage.

I felt lonesome. I didn't believe there were such things as haunted houses,<sup>13</sup> but if there were haunted houses Cedro Cottage certainly offered facilities for a ghost who liked country life but didn't care to be too far from a railroad station.

<sup>11</sup> Except for some cooking and eating utensils and implements, which we left with Ed Warren, and possibly a few books, we travelled light and our packing was simple. We were nomads, in effect camping out.

<sup>12</sup> Recent college generations would have said they were pitching woo. If there is a newer name for it than that I don't know it. The general idea, I believe, remains the same.

<sup>13</sup> I still don't. Sometimes I wish I did. It would depend on who was doing the haunting.

## 2

As I learned later, Cedro had once been the home of Mrs. Stanford's brother, Ariel Lathrop. When the Professor moved in its cellar had been full of empty bottles. Ariel may have been a drinking man. The Professor thought he had been. I don't believe, however, that the spirit that haunted Cedro, or would have done so if this had been practicable, was Ariel Lathrop's. It was a spirit which would enjoy life without alcoholic stimulants. It wouldn't have been hostile to them. It wouldn't have been a blue-nose. It just wouldn't have required them. It was (I see that I must take it for granted) poetically sad at times, but never morose. When the moon was over Cedro, and the tar-weed smell came across the fields, it fairly purred with gladness, and you could feel its heart breaking, happily, with beauty. Or you thought you could. I can't prove it.

Cedro was a simple structure for the period (in the late 'seventies or early 'eighties, I suppose) when it was built. It was one-storied, with living quarters on the left as you faced the easterly or southeasterly<sup>1</sup> front of the structure, a flat-roofed dining-room in the center, contrasting with the peaked roofs to right and left, and a kitchen at the right. East of the main building at a little distance was a small, two-roomed cabin, intended, I suppose, for servants' quarters.<sup>2</sup> The barn and stable were on the right, at an angle with the main house. Directly back, or westerly, of the

<sup>1</sup>The points of the compass have never been right since I left Williamstown, Vermont, in 1901. I am the kind of woodsman who is always coming on familiar-looking tracks—his own.

<sup>2</sup>It never occurred to me when I lived there that the cabin was serving its intended purpose. A servant was something one read about, not anything one was, or could be, at Cedro in Veblen's time.

main house some one had once tried to make a formal garden, but it wasn't very formal when we first saw it and we did nothing to make it formal. To the right of that there had recently been a kitchen garden. Still further to the right, through a hedge, was the chicken-house. There was a persimmon tree on the place, and a fig tree, where, under my brother's kindly tutelage, I was later to learn that green figs are not good to eat. All around were fields, level or gently rolling, with scattered oaks that always made me think of old-fashioned New England orchards before farmers spoiled everything by planting their apple-trees in mathematical rows. I think this is enough description. Cedro was not quite real. An entirely different description might have been just as accurate.

It was mysterious that night. I thought of Pa and William cosily reading on Webster Street. I thought of couples queening on Roble Lane, holding hands and perhaps even kissing. I heard a carriage rattle along the main road, across the moonlit fields, and some one singing. There weren't any noises around Cedro. There weren't enough noises.

It was quite dark now, except for the moon. I went inside and looked around. Nothing jumped out at me. I knew nothing would. I walked through the dining-room into the living-room, and quickly through the living-room, which smelled of matting and seemed unfriendly, into the Professor's study. It was a snug, stuffy room, odorous of books and tobacco. I read the titles of some of the books. Mostly they dealt with economics or anthropology, and were heavy going for a second-year history major, just changed over from English. Then I found a copy of H. G. Wells' "First Men in the Moon," and read that. For a while I sat with my back to the living-room, but it did seem as though my shoulder was being looked over. I swung round, but wasn't certain that I wasn't being inspected from the window. Finally I got the chair at an angle where I could watch both door and window. Ariel Lathrop didn't show up. No one did. Nothing did. Cedro Cottage slept delicately, without even a creak. The trouble was, one expected a creak.

I want to make it clear that I wasn't in the least superstitious. What I wished to avoid was hearing anything or seeing anything

that couldn't be rationally explained. I didn't wish to become superstitious.

About ten o'clock I went around into the garden. There were two structures in it that I haven't mentioned. One was an out-house, with trellis work around it and plumbing inside. It was the most beautiful building of its kind that I have ever seen. You could take a bath there, but if you wanted hot water you had to carry it out from the kitchen in a teakettle. The other structure, architectural twin of the first, and balancing it with an evident striving for harmony, was a garden house, open on one side, with a wide bench inside it. I looked back at the main building. I still thought I didn't understand it, nor it me. I went inside again and brought out some bedding, and arranged a sort of camp for the night in the garden house. This was the season of the California year when it wouldn't rain—and a handy arrangement that is, too.

It was beautiful out there. I could see its beauty, even with my eyes shut. I could smell it. I can see it, smell it, hear it yet. There are a few such nights in a lifetime, sometimes alone and sometimes with people. Being alone is good, and being with people is better if they are that kind of people. This was, I think, my first of this sort, but not the last. A body could relax and let the night flow through, the universe flow through.

I hope I have made this plain. It does happen.

The morning light waked me up. The cottage and the land seemed friendly. They were that way ever afterwards. I never again felt lonesome there, in any unhappy sense.

## 3

My brother William has a memory of his first meeting with the Professor. Veblen's eyes seemed to him to be a pale, cold blue, though they were, in fact, brown, and there really was warmth somewhere behind them. They lighted up when he was amused or interested, which did occur in those days.

I don't recall my own first meeting. The Professor was there—that was all. I don't think my impression of him changed. It was merely amplified as time went on. He seemed from the beginning to know everything, including what I was thinking. When he said, "I don't know," as he almost always did when you asked him point blank for a bit of information, I never believed him. He knew, all right.

The Professor accepted William, Pa and myself as readily as though he had had us made to order. He didn't seem to wonder where we had come from, or why. In his dry way he immediately established a relationship with each of us—never intimate, never with any outward warmth, and yet perfectly easy and comfortable. He thought me very young, though I was nineteen. Once I asked William, at the dinner table, for the loan of his safety razor.<sup>1</sup> This was a base and cowardly thing to do, because William couldn't very well refuse in the Professor's presence. When I had gone out Veblen asked, with what seemed to be real curiosity, "What does he mean to do with it?" William told me about this afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> William says that I began shaving when we were both in high school in Waterbury, Vermont, and that he himself gave me my first shave, with an old-fashioned razor. Maybe he did. I seem to recall that my face was sore about that time. I remember shaving myself, too, beginning at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning and not getting through in time to get to church at eleven. I was too bloody, anyhow, to go to church.

He even gave me a safety razor on my next birthday. He himself had learned about razors in his innocent childhood, when he had borrowed Pa's old-fashioned hollowground to sharpen a pencil.

The Professor must have thought William very young, too, though he was two and a half years older than myself, and at that time knew more about life than I did. William had the seeming advantage of being an economics major, and therefore in the Professor's own department, but I don't believe Veblen regarded this as likely to do William much good. We learned in time that Veblen was sceptical about the science of economics, as a thing standing by itself above or below human nature, and that he did not regard lecturing to undergraduates as much more than a necessary nuisance. William did take one of his courses in the fall semester of the following year, and being used to the Veblen dialectic got a good deal out of it.<sup>2</sup> But some students didn't, and the fact that they didn't was the least of Veblen's worries.

Pa was, of course, a case apart. It startles me now to realize that he, with his gray beard and his growing weakness, seemed an old man, whereas Veblen, only four years younger, and brown-haired and brown-bearded, as he remained to his dying day, appeared as youthful of body as he did ageless in speech. He was naturally deliberate, but he could move as quickly as a cat, and I don't remember that he ever seemed tired. I think he liked Pa, who had the sceptical Scotch mind, and in no way resembled Mr. Bishop's conception of a good Presbyterian. Pa would listen to him, and nod a bit from time to time, and I remember him telling William and me that we could learn a good deal by paying attention to what the Professor had to say. Pa knew a good thing when he saw it, and he valued knowledge more than gold.

As for William and myself, we knew that the Professor was a learned man. No one had told us that he was, in his way, a great man. Pa couldn't tell us that, for he hadn't known many professors, and he may have thought that they all knew as much as

<sup>2</sup> William still has the notes he took in this course, but he was in Washington, D. C., and they were in Columbus, Ohio, in storage, when these pages were being composed. I was thus saved from the temptation to liven them up a bit and present them as Veblen's table talk.

Veblen. We were like those early settlers who once owned part of the city of Chicago, and liked it well enough, but weren't smart enough to hold on to it. This is why most of Veblen's familiar conversation at Cedro was lost.

For some reason it is hard to recall the exact order in which the menage at Cedro Cottage multiplied and then dwindled. At first there were only the four of us. In addition, and I still think of them as characters, there were about forty hens and two or more roosters, all running wild around the place during the day-time; two cows, one of them, in September, 1907, pregnant; and two Indian ponies, a black one whose name I forgot, and a red-and-white mare named Beauty. The Professor rode Beauty for exercise, and hitched her to a two-wheeled cart for going on errands to Palo Alto or elsewhere. It was practicable to go about in this way, for there weren't enough automobiles to hinder anybody. I remember driving Beauty to Palo Alto after dark without bothering to carry a lantern on the dashboard. Just outside of town, on what is now the main road south from San Francisco, in normal times nowadays alive with motorists (and occasionally dead with them, too), I nearly ran into two cyclists in the dark, also without lights. We swore at each other without seeing each other's faces. It was sweet and idyllic.

Cedro Cottage also had an indefinite number of cats,<sup>8</sup> who multiplied rapidly all the time we were there. The prize was a yellow male, who eventually became so tame that we could drape him around our necks on cold mornings, his head hanging limply on one side, his hind legs on the other. I think he was part of a litter born in the summer of 1907, which the mother cat was still nursing when she conceived and bore a second litter. This second litter she, or her paramour, killed and ate. I imagine she regretted this crime, for the original offspring went on nursing, that being

<sup>8</sup> My brother doubts the statement. He thinks the cats could easily have been counted and were therefore not indefinite in number. But it seems to me that they were numerous enough to be difficult to count, especially as some of them were always coming and going, and, the climate being mild, were not kept indoors at night. They had lives of their own, which intersected ours at only a few points. They were busy and preoccupied and, except for the yellow tom, didn't give a damn about anything.

the easiest way of getting a living, until they were almost as big as their mother. I can still see the ensemble, looking like a fair-sized catskin rug. My belief is that they finally nursed her completely away, for she disappeared. There was never any cat famine around Cedro, however.

I shall have more to say about the fowls and animals at Cedro later on, and if I had the gift of total recall I am sure I could write a large and valuable book about them. And these personalities seemed to grow richer, or possibly we merely got better acquainted with them, as the months passed. There was something about Cedro, or about Veblen, or about the situation, that created personality where none had existed before. We had our regular communications with the outside world—indeed, the Veblen menage existed under the pretense of giving or receiving an education at Stanford University—but we were also like persons (and animals and fowls) on a desert island. There was an illusion of room, physical and (though I wouldn't have dared say this to the Professor) spiritual.

My brother and I looked after the hens, the cats, the cows and the horses. Fortunately we both knew how to milk. Generally we did this out of doors, behind the barn. There were mosquitoes when the wind blew off the Bay, some miles to the eastward. With a scientific interest aroused by Veblen I used to like to watch how big and how red a mosquito on a cow's flank could get, if let alone. The cow used to wait until I was absorbed. Then she would switch her manure-laden tail in my eye and at the same time put her foot in the milk bucket.<sup>4</sup> But I was always sanitary. I strained the milk.

The Wilson-Baker family, consisting of Mrs. Wilson, who was to act as housekeeper; Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Wilson's mother; and little Virginia Wilson, arrived soon after we did. This event seemed natural to me at the time. It must have seemed natural to the Professor, since he had brought it about. In starting out to

<sup>4</sup> I never read an account of boy life on a farm in which the cow did not put her foot in the milk bucket. But I am not trying to be original. I am trying to tell what happened. I do not see what survival value there is in this instinct in cows, but cows do have it.

acquire the services of a student he had more or less inadvertently built his household of one into a household of four. A household of four manifestly needed a housekeeper. I think Mrs. Wilson had been brought to his attention through the good offices of a Socialist family in Palo Alto, the Arnotts. She believed herself to be a Socialist; and therefore, as I suppose, likely to be a good housekeeper for the author of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* and *The Theory of Business Enterprise*. She certainly performed her duties at Cedro none the worse for having wrestled with Karl Marx. Practically any one in those days who didn't thoroughly approve of the capitalistic system was considered to be a Socialist. The word was about as damning in the ears of careful and timid persons as Communist later became. It scared the hell out of them. A year or two later Gene Debs was refused permission to speak on the Stanford campus, apparently for fear he would unhinge the undergraduate mind. If you wanted to know about Socialism you could learn all you needed to carry around, including why it wouldn't work, in freshman economics.<sup>5</sup> But you couldn't tie Socialism to the Professor. He was nobody's disciple but his own. His interest in life was in taking other people's dogmas apart and never putting them together again.

I think he reasoned that if the Wilson-Baker family wanted to come to Cedro, regardless of whether they had or had not read *Das Kapital*, they ought to do so. He accepted them, just as he had accepted the three Duffuses when he actually had need of no more than one. The result was that the Veblen establishment grew to a total membership of seven persons, six of them ostensibly devoted to the task of keeping the Professor comfortable and happy. I don't think it ever occurred to any of us that we were not doing so, or that the Professor's attitude was unusual. He didn't pose as a philanthropist and we didn't suspect that he was

<sup>5</sup> Jack London did lecture at Stanford during my time, but I guess he effected an entrance because he was a literary man as well as a radical. London came under the auspices of a student organization, whose chairman introduced him by saying that the organization was studying Socialism, had already held two discussions about it and meant to finish it in a third discussion. London laughed at this, but it didn't take him long to explain what his own Socialism meant. It meant simply that he was sorry for people who were suffering needlessly in a land of plenty, and that he was angry at those who, as he thought, had caused the suffering.

one. All that he insisted upon with us, as he told my brother, was that there should be no "cash nexus"—that is, no pay in money. I don't know whether or not he paid Mrs. Wilson.

With so many persons in the family there was something for each of us to do. My brother and I continued to attend to the livestock and the firewood. Virginia had to go to school in Palo Alto, and my father at once had an occupation in taking her there in the morning and driving down again to bring her back in the afternoon. Once he carried some belongings of Mrs. Veblen to the place where she was staying in Palo Alto. She told me long afterwards what a kindly, intelligent "old man" he seemed to be. And long after that the pathos of the observation struck me like a blow. He wasn't old. He was a man with wounds honorably come by.

Mrs. Wilson did the cooking, with a single exception. The Professor always insisted upon making his own coffee, using the drip system, in an earthenware pot. Every morning and every evening while we were there he went out into the kitchen, waiting patiently and usually silently until the process was completed. This was his one refinement in culinary taste, so far as I observed. Otherwise he took what he could get in the way of food, and made no complaints.

Mrs. Baker was a sprightly old lady, a bit cynical about human nature but never querulous outside of her immediate family. She did not share her daughter's Socialism, but I got the impression that what with various big and little vexations she thought the world was going to the dogs. This did not worry her too much and she had long ago seen the folly of trying to do anything about it. She had what in a New Englander might have been called the attic instinct, which persisted under difficulties in a migratory existence. While at Cedro Cottage she was saving the little can openers that come attached to cans of food, but which in those days as at the present time never actually worked.<sup>6</sup> She also saved string. I think she took the can openers and the string away with her when she went, together with old newspapers and other odds

<sup>6</sup> William says they are indeed difficult to work, but not impossible. For me they are and always have been impossible.

and ends—all, of course, with Veblen's blessing. I hope they did her some good, for she was an interesting and well-inclined old lady.

Virginia was an active little girl, about ten or eleven years old, without much respect for her elders. Other people might stand in awe of the Professor. She didn't. One evening, as we were about to sit down to supper, Virginia accosted him. I suppose she had caught sight of his initials on a piece of mail.

"What does T. B. stand for?" she demanded.

Mrs. Wilson shook her head in a worried sort of way.

The Professor smiled. He had a variety of ways of smiling. Almost always there was irony in his expression. When he smiled too gently you waited for the blistering epigram. But this time he looked very genially at Virginia, and remembering the look I now wonder what he would have been like if he had then had children of his own, and how they would have affected his philosophy.

"It stands," he said, "for Teddy Bear."

After that Virginia always called him Teddy Bear. The rest of us didn't.

## 4

V. P., William and I lived in the cabin. V. P. had one of the little rooms to himself. William and I had the other, and in this we slept and studied. The rooms were barely furnished. There were three beds, or cots, two tables, some chairs. We provided our own bedding and towels. Aside from small personal belongings and a few necessary books this was all we had. Even as to clothing we were limited. I was wearing out a sort of brown suit in which I had graduated from a Vermont high school in 1905, and I had an extra pair of pants. I don't believe I pressed my suit, or had it pressed, all that winter. William may have done a little pressing. He was handy that way. We did our own washing, except for detached shirt collars which we sent to a laundry in Palo Alto—and not one for each day in the week, either. It was the custom among Stanford undergraduates then to wear, in the cooler months, what were called semester shirts—blue flannel garments that the engineering students, and some others, were said to wear four months without washing. We washed ours but it was not necessary to iron them. If we hung them out smoothly on the clothes line the bright California sunshine seemed to us to serve well as a labor-saving device.<sup>1</sup>

I hope this description does not give an impression of grim hardship. We were not conscious of any such thing. We rather prided ourselves on not being under the tyranny of possessions. If our quarters were bare they were cheerful, with pleasant surroundings and the sun and air coming in freely. When my socks

<sup>1</sup> My favorite aunt, Alice M. Cooley, used to tell of a miner she met in the San Bernardino mountains in the 'eighties. He had two shirts. When one was soiled he hung it outdoors on a line. When, about six months later, the other one was soiled he put on the first one and hung out the second one. The sun and rain did the rest.

gave out and I darned them with string because at the moment I had no darning cotton and no money to spend on any, I had a sense of triumph over difficulties, though the string did hurt my feet. I came to the point where a sock that did not show any holes above the top of the shoe was a good sock. And sometimes I wore high shoes or boots, as many other students did at that time.

One reason why we did not resent our minor deprivations, I think, was that the mores by which we were unconsciously guided were those of Cedro Cottage, and therefore those of Thorstein Veblen, not those of the usual undergraduate community. I still have a sense of incongruity when I read (in time of peace) advertisements in which tailors insist that a boy had as well not go to college as go improperly dressed. Proper dress at Stanford, for men, was rough and ready. The university had a tradition of respect for the student working his way, and of self-respect in the working student himself. As for Cedro, under Veblen's silent assumptions, all artificial distinctions were there not merely valueless but absurd. We felt no bitterness toward students who were rich enough to wear clean white shirts every day, unless their wealth made them arrogant. We were doing something they didn't and maybe couldn't. We were on our own. We had a different kind of good time from theirs, but it really was a good time. V. P. said there was nothing in the world he would like better than to be in our boots working his way through Stanford. Although—or perhaps because—he had never attended school after the age of ten he was a great believer in education.

It was V. P.'s condition that worried us and kept that fall at Cedro from being an altogether carefree adventure. V. P. was growing weaker. What were we going to do if he had to be taken to a hospital? What hospital? V. P. had an answer. He told William that we should ask the county hospital to take care of him. He said he thought we could make good use of a university training and he did not mean to be a burden on us. This was heroism of a sort that I can't write about unmoved, even today. It wasn't heroism that his sons, who wished to go through life with clear consciences, could accept. They couldn't buy an education at that

cost. But he meant it. He would have stood by the offer. He had the Scotch ideal of one generation sacrificing itself to raise the next a little higher. Not in wealth and social standing. Those things weren't primary with him. In knowledge. That was what he craved for himself, and craved vicariously for us.

We talked about it. It was a black cloud over us. We didn't think of asking Veblen for help. I know now that he himself had little spare cash that year, but I am inclined to think he would have done what he could if we could have asked him. But we couldn't ask him. Nor could we draw on our straitened family resources in Vermont. There didn't seem to be any good solution. And then the matter was taken out of our hands.

I am still writing of the first month of our time at Cedro. I find it hard to recover certain pictures. I can't, for instance, see the seven of us sitting around the table at supper time, though we certainly did so. I can't recall much of Veblen's conversation at this period. I think Mrs. Wilson, the good, eager soul that she was, choked him off by asking him to explain difficult points in Marxian theory, or to interpret current events in the vein of *The Theory of Business Enterprise*. He said he didn't know. Mrs. Wilson never did learn that the only way to get information out of Veblen, except in a class-room or a book, was to pretend you didn't want any. Mrs. Wilson had no guile.

I remember her sitting in the kitchen after work was done in the evening. This was quite a large room, with windows on three sides, a very large kitchen range for which we had to chop huge quantities of wood, a three-plate kerosene burner, a sink, and space enough to swing several cats if we had cared to do so. Mrs. Wilson would put on her glasses and read Marx's *Capital*. She made heavy weather of it, and I don't blame her. I don't believe she ever gave up hope that some day Veblen would explain Marx to her. She had a sense of intellectual opportunity that would have been a credit to any woman. But he never did. And he never talked about interstitial adjustments, conspicuous expenditure, conscientious withholding of efficiency, or anything else in that line in those words. He talked straightforward English, and could have written it if he had cared to do so. He made no mysteries.

He did not set up as a prophet in his own household. He was full of the most dismaying kind of commonsense. And commonsense wasn't what Mrs. Wilson wanted. She wanted to be dazzled and impressed.

I don't think V. P. ever asked Veblen questions, except as to practical things having to do with the daily routine. I seem to see him, gray-bearded but somehow like a student, turning a hungry gaze toward the Professor. After V. P. had had his brief schooling, in Scotland, he had worked for a little while, as a young boy still, in a bookstore. In his memory the experience was rosy-tinted. I suppose he often wondered how different his life might have been if he had continued in that bookstore or at school, instead of being apprenticed to the granite-cutting trade. He had a clear, critical, logical mind, without sentimentality. His higher education, and I do call it that, had been mostly from books. He would have been surprised if he had been told what I think was the truth, that he was better educated than most college graduates. He had, indeed, the misgivings of the self-taught man, who suspects that there are secrets in formal disciplines that he will never know. In Veblen he had encountered a man who clearly knew everything. He felt humble, not because Veblen at that time had worldly success but because of this precious cargo of learning that Veblen carried around. But he was well aware that you couldn't capture any part of that cargo, as Drake took the Spanish galleons, by running alongside and opening fire. You had to be silent and wait. And V. P.'s waiting time was short.

There was the whir of the coffee grinder as the Professor prepared to make his evening brew. There was the bustle of the supper getting ready, the milk being brought in, the whinnying of horses, the lowing of cows, some cat sounds, the wind in the cypress, the clatter of chairs, the rattle of dishes. Supper would be over, the final chores done, V. P., William and I would retire to our cabin. V. P. would be reading, William and I studying. Peace would settle over Cedro. But in the night V. P. would begin to cough. If only it had been the dust of books that was in him, not the dust of granite! His whole life must have been passing before him. How well I know it now! He must have thought of his wife, our

mother, three thousand miles away, who would have come to him if she could; and of the days when they had sung in the church choir together; and of our younger sister, Marjorie, of whom he was especially fond.

He used a phrase at that time that rang in my ears for a long space afterwards. "I'm a cumberer of the earth," he would say. He could not see that he had earned the right to more than the little that he had; and that something was owed him by the society that had charged him seven years of life for his skill, and then had paid him off with granite dust and bronchitis and rheumatism. The dust was not necessary. Most of it is avoided now in granite-cutting. The lives of countless men, his own among them, had to be thrown away to teach employers that simple lesson. His insecurity was not necessary, either, nor would he have been quite so insecure had he been born a generation later. I think of him when I hear it said that social security kills initiative. I know this: that the lack of it killed men.

But he had been all his days an individualist. It was too late for him to comfort himself with an indictment of a competitive and ruthless society. I suppose he did not realize that Veblen's indictments, so far as he had come to understand them, were his own vindication. He went down proudly. He asked no quarter.

He grew weaker, but except for his cough he did not seem to be in pain. We called no doctor. We had grown up in an environment (and so had V. P.) in which the doctor was not called for less than urgent reasons. He was a last resort. Later we were glad to know that no physician could have prescribed anything of much use to him, beyond the rest and good food he was already having.

One warm day during the first week in October I hitched up Beauty and took V. P. for a drive. I am not sure whether or not we had the excuse of an errand. There were the brown hills and the oaks which sometimes reminded me of the orchards of Vermont, and made me homesick. The sea fog was showing above the saw-tooth crest, marked out by tall redwood trees, of the coastal range to the west. There was the dust of the road, rising lazily under our slow wheels, and the dusty scents of the fields. The fog would not come down into the valley, but there would be the faint-

est dimming, softening and romanticizing of the brown bulk of the foothills.

V. P. looked at the good earth in silence. I remember only one thing he said. He had a feeling of weakness in his legs, he told me. It had come over him lately. He had once been a great walker, with a long, sure stride. Now he seemed appealing to me for reassurance, and this chilled me. In his Old Country way he might lean on William, his older son and first-born. They had been together, not just as father and son but as companions on a hard road, as two adults having little successes and little failures, and somehow making out. I hadn't been through that. And V. P. had never trusted my judgment, thinking me sentimental and erratic. But now he was different. He waited for my reply. I said I sometimes had that feeling, too. As I had been a thin and delicate youngster, and had come to California partly for my health, he may have believed me. I hope he did.

Except on Saturdays and Sundays William and I were usually at the University all day. We took lunches, and in the good weather ate them, in company with two or three other students, in one of the oases—circular patches planted with palms, bamboo or shrubs—in the Inner Quad. Sometimes we would hear old Dr. Blodgett practicing on the organ in the half-ruined chapel, where no one else was allowed to go. The music would rumble along, formless at that distance, but pleasant and tranquil. In the afternoon we might have classes or seminars, but most often, in my case, at least, the time would be spent reading in the library. I can recall many a session with the histories of the Popes, or the dreary old stuffed shirts of the Holy Roman Empire, scrawling notes that were never as neat as William's, and suddenly wondering what this dusty stuff had to do with the life we were leading. The Popes and the emperors were so dead, and their hopes and their doings so dead with them; and there weren't then, and aren't now, many historians who can make you understand that history, when it happens, is an *is* and not a *was*. It was all too much like studying a dusty mounted specimen in a museum, and never seeing the real bird soaring and singing. And Cedro came to seem to me at times a refuge, a dream and the only sure reality.

There were girls in that library, Stanford being blessedly co-educational,<sup>2</sup> and a stranger from Cedro Cottage (and such I, at least, was at that time) might look at some of them with interest, taking care not to be caught staring. He looked at them through a haze, and had pleasant illusions about them. It was another year before the haze went partly away—thank God, never wholly away.

The studying and the dreaming, the notes that themselves seemed to gather dust, the Popes and the princesses, the Holy Roman Emperors and the shadowy medieval life of flesh and blood that one tried to find moving around them, in silks and rags, with perfumes and stinks—this ended for a while one afternoon.

Virginia Wilson came into the library, a strange little-girl figure among the big girls and boys, going from aisle to aisle in the reading-room looking for me. My father was sick. He was very sick. Virginia's mother said I was to come home right away.

I suppose I knew what it meant. I pedalled hard. I had to jump off at the footbridge, and then push the bicycle up the hill to the cottage, the sand grating under my feet, the cedars tall and solemn. My father was dead. Mrs. Wilson sat beside him, keeping his eyes gently shut, the tears running down her nose. William wasn't there. He had been with V. P. when he died. He had gone to Palo Alto for a physician. And an undertaker.

He had died in some pain, but suddenly. There hadn't been too much mercy for him in his death, any more than in his life, but there had been some. When Mrs. Wilson stood up at last he looked peaceful. There was great dignity, and a kind of beauty in his face. I thought of a photograph of him I had seen, taken when he was in his early twenties, when he was handsome and hopeful. The good, strong shape of the face survived, but now it was sorrowful. He had had laughter, even in the hard years, but now it was gone.

Fragments of memories come back, but not the whole of the days and hours that followed. I think I had to drive down to Palo

<sup>2</sup>I believe in co-education. They might as well get used to seeing each other around. This is a co-educational world.

Alto. I think the undertaker's wagon passed me, after dark, as I drove back, and I tried not to see what it was. I know I looked up at a glittering sky and couldn't gather enough of the religious faith in which I had been brought up to believe that he who was no longer here could be somewhere else. V. P. had once told William that he wished he could have the simple faith our mother had. He said he had wondered all his life about life after death, but he did not see how one could know. He was an agnostic, not an atheist. He didn't know. Did he know now? The stars were so cold, so distant, the earth so warm and near.

V. P. hadn't always been in sympathy with me. Our temperaments were too different. I had not dared oppose his authority, yet at times I had been resentful. These things leave their mark on personality, and no doubt did on mine. But he had belonged in life, and in my life. So much, clear back into earliest childhood—and I could remember back to the age of three—was linked with him. I recalled the shock of fear I had one afternoon, in the old days in Williamstown, Vermont, when he had come home from work in the middle of the afternoon, pale and strained-looking. He had injured his hand. Then, I thought, forgetting all my childish angers, nothing must happen to him. He had had a hearty bass voice, and small family jokes when everything was going well. My mother would play the organ and he would sing, and it was all very good, indeed. Sometimes in my boyhood when I had thought him at his sternest he had been unexpectedly kind. We weren't to have firecrackers that year—but we got them. We weren't to see the Uncle Tom show again—but we did. He had been mindful of us. He had worked hard for us at his deadly trade. And on that last drive he had seemed to ask something from me, and I hadn't given it.

We went to the doctor, who had to make out a death certificate. He had a medical term for it, but it was granite cutting that had killed my father: granite cutting for employers, themselves good, kindly victims of a brutal tradition, who hadn't realized that men's lives were worth more than granite or profits. We went to the undertaker's. My father had not lost the look of dignity, almost of majesty, that I had seen on his face just after death. I have not

forgotten it, after all these years. I walked to the window of the grim little room, and looked out, seeing nothing.

We waited while arrangements were made for William to go back to Vermont with the body—for so it had been decided. The Professor tactfully advanced some necessary money. There was an intervening afternoon when William and I laid new matting in the living-room at Cedro. I remember the fresh smell of it. In the reaction from strain we fell into a strange hilarity, of which I was then ashamed. I did not know that such reactions were necessary.

For the rest, I remember most clearly one moment with Veblen. I had gone into the house that first afternoon, toward the end of it, I think, and there I met him. He waited for me to speak. I was embarrassed. You did not talk of intimately poignant emotions with Veblen. But you had to say something.

At last I mumbled, "You've heard about my father?" I knew he had.

He looked at me without changing his expression. "I am very sorry," he said.

That was all he ever said, in my presence, about my father.

## 5

William came back from Vermont, and we adjusted ourselves to what had happened. There was some comfort in knowing that though V. P. rested far from his native land, far from the foggy harbor in which the fishing-boats lay at night with their lights like fireflies, and the tall highland girls came down to pack the catch, yet he had at least come home to the town in which he had met my mother, and in which they had had happy moments and been young together.

But Vermont was a long way from California, and at nineteen or twenty-one even the recent past is a long way from the present. William could tell of one or two happenings on the trip east that would have amused V. P. We could remember things about him that were not in any way tragic. It has been harder to write about his last days than it was to think about them then. And even now I see that the last days are not only a small part but perhaps even an unimportant part of a person's life, and that it is not fair to dwell too much on them.

V. P. had had his laughter, even though it stopped, and his fine moments in spite of many disappointments and the ultimate failure. I learned to know him better, and to value him more, after he was no longer there to know. Something noble in him lasted, just as his old silver watch went on ticking for a day after his last winding of it: I found it on the table and with a shock I realized that here was some last energy of his that had survived after his voice, and his thinking, and his hoping and his loving were done with forever.

We went on with our living, and I shall try to go on with my remembering.

The Wilson-Baker family left, and Harry George arrived. I am not sure whether or not they overlapped. I think they did not. In any case, there was no connection between their going and Harry's coming. There was no necessary connection between any two events that occurred at Cedro Cottage.

It may be that the Professor was getting short of funds. It may be that he didn't care for feminine society, except when he wanted it. I would not say positively that he never got on Mrs. Wilson's nerves, nor she on his. How to get Virginia to school during the rainy season was a problem. There were all sorts of reasons, and no reason. I don't think Mrs. Wilson or Mrs. Baker was very well. Anyhow, they packed up, including the string and the can-openers, and departed. William and I were sorry to see them go. They had been kind to us, especially when V. P. died. They had shown honest sympathy and been somebody to talk to when one couldn't talk to the Professor. I can't say that we enjoyed having a girl of ten or eleven years around the place, because girls of that age get into the milk after one has set it out for the cream to rise, they break eggs, and they do not respect college sophomores. But Virginia was probably brighter than the average girl of her age, and her intentions were always good.

Having said all this in fairness to those concerned, I must go on to say that we were relieved to find ourselves on a monastic basis. I said a little earlier that I believed in co-education, and I do, but it need not go on twenty-four hours a day. There can be a neutral ground, and forays. This, at least, became the Professor's plan. It was not ours, for various reasons. We (and I am beginning to include Harry George in this pronoun) were truly monastic at that time, in conduct if not in imagination and certainly not in speech. But of this more later.

We saw the Wilson-Baker family a few times after that. Once, after they had gone, William discovered that the cream had disappeared from some pans of milk and charged me with the theft. I can see now that the evidence pointed directly at me. I did eat nearly everything I could lay hands on, and at any time when I was awake, or nearly awake. I remember telling Harry George,

some months afterwards, that I was going to take up a two-meal-a-day schedule. He gave me a nasty look.

"That's one more than you eat now," he said.

"What do you mean?" I demanded, falling into the trap.

Harry smiled wearily. "You eat just one now. It begins when you get up and ends when you go to bed."

I hadn't taken the cream, however. Virginia had done that. I think she had an understanding with the Professor that she might. She had just forgotten to mention it, and taken it in passing, as it were. Since then I have always been sympathetic with persons who are sentenced to be hung or electrocuted on circumstantial evidence. Or on any evidence, for that matter. I prefer to leave cold-blooded killing to the criminals. I don't like to see a respectable government doing it.

Harry George did not come to Cedro to work for Veblen. In fact, I believe his original intention had been to do his own cooking in the tent we had set up for him near the eastern boundary of the Cedro property. Harry was tuberculous and had to live outdoors as much as possible. He had been introduced to Veblen by Harry A. Millis, then an assistant professor in the Department of Economics at Stanford,<sup>1</sup> whom he had known in Chicago. Harry George was a naturally bookish and studious young man, and had wanted to specialize in philosophy and psychology. I don't know what his background was, except that his father had died and he didn't get on with his mother. She had, I suppose, tried to dictate to him, and no one, big or little, man or woman, rich or poor, could dictate to Harry George.

"It either breaks a boy's spirit," he told me once, "when his father or mother tries to domineer over him, or it makes him so stubborn nothing can break it."

His spirit was never broken, not even by the illness which had ruined his plans, and the subsequent experiences which had car-

<sup>1</sup> Millis became a distinguished economist, an authority on labor problems, an eminent mediator, and, among other distinctions, he was drafted as chairman of the National Labor Relations Board. Later, as a working student, I found a second home with the Millises, and they became warm-hearted and life-long friends, not only mine but my family's and my brother's. William studied under Millis, as did I, but mine was an elementary course.

ried him from a job in the John Crerar Library in Chicago to a wild sort of life in the West. He remained himself, and it didn't matter whom he was with. He had a holy respect for Veblen, but this was because Veblen exacted nothing from him.

He was one of the purest-minded men (he was in his late twenties then) I have ever known, and also, when he put his mind to it, one of the foulest-mouthed. He said it would be impossible for him to go out buggy-riding with a girl. He said he couldn't look any girl in the face after a horse had answered a call of nature and then got its tail over the reins. He said he would have to get out of the buggy and go home alone. He said he would die. He used to sing a parody of a popular song that would have brought a blush to the face of a wooden Indian. It was so awful that even now I cannot mention the original title of the song with composure. Harry said he thought babies ought to be kept out of sight. Every one knew what caused them, he pointed out. How could a person of refinement parade them around and fuss over them?

Harry looked like a disillusioned angel. He had a mop of very fine yellow hair, blue eyes that could get hard but rarely did, and a resolute, humorous, somewhat one-sided smile. He must have been very innocent, and very innocent-looking, when he first came West. I don't know all his adventures, but some of them must have been tough. He had tried to adapt himself to his surroundings. One of his jobs had been with a railroad construction gang. One day the straw boss, himself a profane and obscene man, who had been listening to his conversation as he worked, accosted him. "George," he demanded, "do you have to swear all the time?"<sup>2</sup> Harry was proud of that incident. It set him up no end.

But though Harry could talk the outdoor language he could

<sup>2</sup>This reminds me of a story told of the late Prof. Oliver Peebles Jenkins, of Stanford University, a well-known biologist. Professor Jenkins was in charge of the marine biological laboratories at Pacific Grove, then used only for summer school students. One day the pump which furnished the necessary salt water for the specimens broke down. Through the open windows of the laboratory, in which a class of young men and women bent over their microscopes, floated the comments of the man who was trying to repair the pump. Professor Jenkins stood it as long as he could and then went outside. His own voice was easily heard in the brief conversation that followed. "Will you," he roared, "stop that God damned swearing?"

not and would not adopt all the customs of his companions. He had, as he used to boast with fierce defiance, kept his virginity. Everything had been done that could be done to cure him of this eccentricity. His associates had frequently offered to stand treat at the very best sporting houses. He knew all about them. But on this one point he wouldn't give in. He had, in spite of himself, or because of himself, a respect for women that amounted to reverence. Women, young or not young, were always attracted to him. He was extremely masculine, with nothing soft or effeminate about him. I think he would have faced any danger, endured any hardship, profane and unperturbed. But with T. B. he couldn't marry, and wouldn't take anything short of marriage. He steeled himself against the thought. Tuberculosis, in those days, at least in his thinking, was just one step above leprosy, so far as marriage was concerned. Renouncing that side of life, he put on a brave front of asceticism. Then he covered that with obscenity. It wasn't simple.

Harry had worked for the United States Geological Survey. He used to repeat a scrap of dialogue about the personnel of the Survey (one of his few publishable anecdotes):

"Mama, will the syphilitic engineers eat hay?"

"Yes, dear, if you put a little whiskey on it."

His job with the Survey required him to be an experienced horseman, which Harry, in Tucson, Arizona, at the time, assured the boss he was. The day before he was to go to work he hired a saddle horse, the first one he had ever climbed on, and rode for hours all over Tucson and vicinity, suffering the torments of the damned. Somehow he managed to stay aboard after he went out on the new job, most of the time, at least. The Survey used to proceed to its stations at a hard, jarring trot—never a walk and never a lope. In due season Harry acquired the calluses, or whatever it is, that made this endurable. One night, coming in late after the cookfires were lighted, he clapped his heels into his animal's flanks and made what he hoped would be a dashing entry, calculated to dispel once for all any notion that he was still a tenderfoot. When I first met him he was not sure that he

had yet extracted all the cactus spines from his hide—nor from his feet, either.

But though he did get tossed into the bushes on that occasion he became an adept rider. One of my favorite English professors, Samuel Swazey Seward, read an essay on horsemanship that Harry had turned in as part of his entrance examinations. Seward had been having trouble with a bronco which he himself, and he was by no means an amateur horseman, had been unable to master. In fact, Professor Seward and this animal had got separated quite conspicuously in the middle of a vacant lot in what is now the business center of Palo Alto. Seward looked Harry up, and Harry busted the bronco in good western style. He and Seward were always warm friends after that. In fact, almost every one who got acquainted with Harry was his warm friend. And Seward was a good friend to have.

Seward had a dear old, but very proper, aunt, with whom he lived during his bachelor days at Stanford. Harry used to tell of being invited to dinner there, and how Seward's aunt looked him over carefully, decided that though he was a sweet boy he must have lived a rough life, and then, apropos of nothing, began to talk informatively of the uses to which quite a bewildering array of knives, forks and spoons laid out beside each plate were put. She went back into history and came down through the ages. "I could have brained her," said Harry thoughtfully, "in spite of her being Seward's aunt."

I am getting ahead of my story, but Harry's sensitiveness makes me think of one day the following summer when we were down on Lasuen Street, that is to say, Fraternity Row, on the campus. Ordinarily a fraternity or sorority house would have been beyond our social range, not because we felt inferior, for we had a kind of inverted snobbishness of our own, but because we were different. The inhabitants of Fraternity Row were something like South Sea Islanders to me, at least—though, if feminine, frequently beautiful. Generally speaking the Row went in for beauty or brawn, according to sex. We thought we were brighter, and I suspect we were. But there were no summer classes at Stanford in those days, the Greek letter tribes were off somewhere in, as I supposed, luxuri-

ous and debasing idleness, and I made no objections when it occurred to Harry to call on a friend, a pleasant, middle-aged lady, who was in residence in one of the sorority houses. She was there, and I think one of her friends was there, and somebody's daughter. I buttoned my coat over a clean but unironed shirt, and nobody ever cared what Harry wore. We had tea and some conversation—at least some that I listened to, for I was not talkative on such occasions. When we came away Harry said: "What do you suppose they meant by that?"

"By what?" I asked. "They seemed glad to see us. You, anyhow," I added modestly.

"That limerick," said Harry darkly.

"Which one?" I inquired. There had been several. Limericks were running around a good deal those days on the Stanford campus.

"The one Miss So-and-So mentioned about the little girl that went to a party and ate just as hearty as though she'd been really invited. We weren't invited, were we? We just dropped in."

"I didn't eat much," said I guiltily.

"You didn't, did you?" Harry shook his head morosely. "I didn't notice. If you didn't it was the first time. What I mean is this. Wasn't that their way of telling us we ought not to have gone there without being asked? How do we know they wanted us?" He nursed this unhappy thought all the way back to Cedro.

This was the damnedest nonsense that any one could possibly have thought up. The dear ladies had obviously adored Harry, and had at least put up with me (a fellow was always getting himself into situations like this when Harry was around; he was like another college friend, whom I shall identify as *Sco*, in that respect; no girl or woman would look at another man when either one was within pistol-shot), but I don't think he would have gone there again without an invitation brought in personally by a liveried footman on a platter.

For some years Harry had been trying to go through college. For a semester or two he would study his beloved philosophy and psychology as an intellectual luxury, and Spanish and surveying for aid in making a living. Then he would begin to cough and run

a fever, and would have to drop out for a while. The climate of the Santa Clara Valley, in which Stanford University is located, suited his condition well enough during the dry season, but not so well during the wet season, from November to April. The better part of the college year, as then arranged, fell in the wet season. Harry was going to stick it out this year, instead of going to Arizona. He hoped that living in a tent would help him. Maybe he knew better. I suppose he had been bitterly lonesome in his wanderings around the West, and if the damp air of Cedro in winter wasn't good for his lungs his ready access to such friends as Seward and the Millises was good for his soul.

I said a while ago that we had set up a tent for Harry. I have a hazy memory of doing the work: a warm, clear, early fall morning, and a feeling of utter tirelessness, so that I went around the place at a lope. I had been supposed (wrongly, as it ultimately turned out) to have a weak heart, but it didn't seem weak that morning. It seemed as though it would go on beating forever. It was good to be working around Cedro. You heard the peaceable discussions and comments of the hens, the cows and ponies were feeding quietly, and there were far-off, undisturbing, almost noiseless sounds. You were on an island, and the surf died in the shallows, and lapped up and ebbed. I hardly knew what was going on in the world those days, away from Cedro and the campus. I hardly wanted to.

If we set the tent up we must have known that Harry was coming. I don't recall that we did know. I don't recall that Veblen mentioned the fact. Things that happened at Cedro just happened. They didn't seem to have either causes or consequences. I believe the Professor discussed this point once, in a general way. He questioned the existence of natural laws. You felt sure, he admitted, that if you walked off the edge of a precipice you would fall. All the persons you had ever seen walking off the edges of precipices had fallen. But your observation was necessarily limited. You couldn't observe all the cases. You couldn't know to what extent coincidence played a part. Even when you had what you judged to be a connected sequence of events you had no right to assume that event A, which happened at eleven in the morning,

was the cause of event B, which happened at a fraction of a second after eleven.

I cannot say that I was intellectually convinced by this reasoning. I wasn't even sure that the Professor wasn't spoofing us. He spoofed a good many people who took his published words for gospel—this I found out later on. But somewhere in my fringe of consciousness<sup>3</sup> I accepted it. Everything that happened at Cedro was natural. Nothing was predictable. I suppose this is the attitude not only of some philosophers but of contented animals. I suppose I was rather in the class of the contented animal, though a part of my brain was certainly working.<sup>4</sup>

At any rate, Harry George appeared one day, and it was as though he had always been there. Coming back from the campus in the afternoon, William and I encountered him walking down the cedar-lined drive. I must have paid particular attention to him, for I have a distinct mental image of his appearance in that place and at that moment. He was limping slightly, since in addition to his other troubles he suffered from sciatica. We exchanged casual salutations. He did not look pleased. I don't recall any intermediate stage between this chilly greeting between strangers and our mutual acceptance of one another as friends of so long a standing that we felt free to exchange insults.

Harry told us later that his first impressions of us were not favorable. We were wearing the bright red or cardinal hats which every sophomore put on at the beginning of his second year, so that he couldn't be mistaken for a freshman. Juniors were permitted to wear plugs and corduroy pants. Seniors decorated themselves with sombreros. Harry had no patience with this sort of thing. For him college was a place to learn. He hungered and thirsted after learning, like a saint after righteousness. The college "traditions" which Stanford, being a youthful institution, was trying so hard to build up, were to Harry a disgusting piece of

<sup>3</sup> The phrase is from William James, who was one of Harry's gods. I don't see that it is not fully as expressive as the later concept of the subconscious. It does not imply, as the word subconscious does, at least to the layman, that there is a skunk or something under the front porch.

<sup>4</sup> William and I both made Phi Beta Kappa in the first semester of our senior year. William worked hard and I chose easy subjects.

childishness. Our red hats made him think we were, in his own expressive words, a couple of bloody sophomores—the usual undergraduates, in fact.<sup>5</sup>

In time he thought better of us. I am afraid we still had too much college spirit to suit him. I had almost died when Stanford seemed about to lose the first intercollegiate game I had ever witnessed. It was only a freshman game, at that. But Harry and Veblen, in their different ways, had the country club idea of college life pretty well knocked out of our systems before the year was over. It is only now that it occurs to me that Cedro Cottage was itself a country club, a pretty exclusive one, too. And also a sort of fraternity. I can't say that after my time at Cedro I was ever pleased when our team lost, but I didn't die.<sup>6</sup>

Harry accepted us as kindred souls. He never did get me to the point where he was satisfied with me. I annoyed him to the end. But he did decide that both William and myself were worth his attention. My heart warms, even now, at this compliment.

<sup>5</sup>Stanford had a student "rebellion" that spring, caused by strenuous faculty action to abate an epidemic of heavy drinking. I heard a student make a speech at a mass meeting. "Do we come here to sit in the library with our noses in a book?" he demanded. "No, we come here to make friends. What do we care for the so-and-so professors?" etc., etc. Harry George thought *we* were like that.

<sup>6</sup>The day did come, long after graduation, when too many Stanford successes on the football field made me uneasy. The disinterested pursuit of learning does not of itself create winning football teams.

## 6

If Harry had intended to cook and eat by himself in his tent Veblen made him give up the plan at once. Veblen wouldn't have discussed the matter. He wouldn't have gone in for any sympathetic words. He would simply have let Harry know that he expected him to come over to the house for his meals. He wouldn't have asked him to do any work, either, and would have been annoyed if Harry had thanked him.

Immediately, therefore, we found ourselves a household of four persons. But Harry was not a young man who could eat anybody's bread without doing work in return. The result was that the Professor now had three students in his service.

We divided the work according to our tastes and temperaments, which fortunately differed. William liked to go to bed early, and whether he really liked it or not (I have never been able to believe that any one could really like it) he could manage to get up early. I liked to stay up late. It has always seemed to me that there is nothing in the world so easy as staying up late. I also liked, and still like, to get up late. I don't know anything easier than that. I had tried getting up early for several years while I was in high school. I was then learning the printer's trade by sweeping out a country newspaper office, looking after fires, carrying newspapers on a route (the Burlington *Free Press* in the morning, and the Boston *Globe*, *Herald* and *Journal* in the afternoon), and, of course, setting type and running a job press or the big flat-bed newspaper press as soon as I could do these things well enough to save the time of a nine-dollar-a-week printer.<sup>1</sup> In winter I got up at half-past five. I ac-

<sup>1</sup> I started out at two dollars a week, and always got that much, during the school year, for somewhere around thirty hours' work a week. In summer, working sixty

complished this by training myself to begin rolling when my Aunt Alice rapped on the stove-pipe, so that by the time I was awake I was up. But I did not glory in this accomplishment. I was always willing to step aside, or lie aside, and let some one else do it. Now I could, and did.

I think Harry liked to stay up late, too. At any rate, we sorted out our working hours to suit every one, and when we quarreled, as we sometimes did, that subject was not an issue. I had a great sense of leisure at Cedro—a curious feeling for a penniless student struggling to get an education.

We all did some cooking. Part of the knowledge which enabled us to do this had been acquired in the rough school of experience. William and I had learned by trying, and I suppose Harry had learned in the same way. The rest of our information came mostly from the Rumford Cook Book, a copy of which inadvertently fell into our hands. This priceless volume not only told how to cook everything into which a pinch or more of baking powder might be harmlessly introduced. It also explained what wines to serve with different meats and courses, and this material, though we had no wines, seemed to give the recipes a certain distinction. I used to wonder how any one, after having white wine with the fish, red wine with the roast and so on down through the dessert could tell just where he was. But perhaps in high society, I thought, he wouldn't need to. I had been brought up to believe that it was but a step from the first drink to the gutter, but I could see that the Rumford people thought differently.

In addition to Count Rumford's contributions, for they did seem to come pretty directly from him, William and I had two recipes brought from home, one for fish chowder, which my mother made so well that you could die eating it, and one for popovers, with which my Aunt Alice, my mother's sister, often

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hours, I finally rose to six dollars a week. Once I stepped on a board in the cellar and one end flew up and stuck a nail in my leg. This injury laid me up for a week and two days. My employer docked my pay from the hour my accident occurred until I returned to work. He used to boast of having made three thousand dollars in two days in a land deal. He had many good qualities, which I have not space to enumerate, but these incidents did set me thinking and perhaps made me more susceptible to some of Veblen's doctrines.

glorified the Sunday breakfast. Aunt Alice also made a lovely sort of codfish ball, about an inch in diameter, fried quickly in deep and very hot fat, and eaten quickly, too. I don't think we tried this on Veblen. We knew our limitations.

I did not then know, and never shall know, how our cooking impressed Veblen. He was imperturbable about it. Maybe he reasoned that he had brought it on himself. Harry's favorite creation was a dish which I believe he had picked up while on the Geological Survey. It was, he said, known as sonnabitch, he hardly knew why.<sup>2</sup> It was a kind of meat pie, to which were added potatoes, onions, carrots, or anything else that happened to be lying around the kitchen. When Harry was engaged in putting this mess together William would go around muttering about the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder.

Harry's first experiment with sonnabitch at Cedro was not a success. The ingredients were all there, but they had not been cooked enough. The Professor chewed at them thoughtfully, but said nothing about them, or indeed about anything else. It may just have been one of his silent evenings. William and I did what we could, and even asked for more. We were young, strong and hungry. Harry was unhappy. He wanted to be useful in the world. He wanted to make the Professor comfortable and satisfied.

He had a phobia. This was that he made a gulping noise when he swallowed and that it disturbed the Professor.

We tried to reassure him. "Nobody can hear it," I said. "It stands to reason we can't. We're making too much noise ourselves."

"I'm not thinking of you," Harry replied scornfully. "I wouldn't mind you and William. I know you make noises when eating. I'm thinking of Veblen. He's sensitive to such things."

"How do you know he is?" I asked. "He always looks just the same, whether you're swallowing at the moment or not. I've watched him."

<sup>2</sup> As I mull over these lines I happen to have been reading *Our Soldiers Speak*, by William Matthews and Dixon Wecter, Little Brown and Co., Boston, 1943. Private Jacob Cole of the 57th New York there states that if "some corn, potatoes or other vegetables could be added" to a "lob scouse" it was "called a son of a gun." I am willing to bet five cents that "gun" wasn't the word the soldiers used, and I do believe Harry's sonnabitch dates back to the Civil War, and maybe to the Revolutionary.

"That just makes it worse." Harry wouldn't be comforted. "If he objected I could do something. I could eat in the kitchen. But he doesn't. He just sits there and suffers."

It was true that you couldn't tell whether the Professor was enjoying himself or not. Some evenings he talked and some evenings he said nothing, but there seemed to be no connection between these moods and what he was having to eat.

Harry redoubled his efforts. He had a way of cooking rice that he said he had learned from a Chinaman. You didn't cook it in a double boiler. You put just enough rice in boiling water in a pot. You didn't stir it. You just let it swell. We tried this on the Professor and he spoke favorably of it. I think he liked the idea that the Chinese, who did not then rank as highly among the rank and file of Americans as they do now, knew some things that Occidentals didn't. Veblen liked to see the under dog make good. He was fond of picking flaws in American civilization, in little matters as well as big ones. And I think he had aesthetic feelings in his make-up. The whole-grained cooked rice was quite beautiful, compared with the usual mush.

Harry liked to be in the kitchen, surrounded by food. There must have been times when he hadn't had enough to eat. Once, he said, he made up his mind that he was going to have enough ice cream. He went to town from the ranch or camp where he was working, evaded his companions, and bought a quart container of it. Then he went back along the road to where it was dark and peaceful and ate the whole quart with the little wooden spoon that went with it. He was happier that night, he said, than he had been for a long time, or was for a long time afterwards. This was his equivalent for a jag, his substitute for a night of love. He felt good out there under the stars, eating ice cream.

He had a daydream of a meal, though I don't believe we often prepared it at Cedro. It consisted of a steak two inches thick, well cooked on the outside and rare on the inside, doused with as much butter as would stay on it; and of a large quantity of baked sweet potatoes with, as he said, too much butter. And, of course, a lot of coffee.

I believe William made the chowder. The basis of this was a

sufficient quantity of dried codfish, which was shredded and soaked, or parboiled, to get the salt out. Then one fried up some bacon until it was crisp. Salt pork would do instead, if you had it. We hadn't. To the codfish and bacon or pork was added a sufficient quantity of potatoes and onions, previously boiled until they were almost but not quite done. Then one sloshed the whole into a quantity of milk, hot enough not to curdle, seasoned it well, brought it up to just short of a boil, to get it on good terms with itself, maybe let it sit for a while, and served it. V.P. had liked this so well that he once talked of setting up a little restaurant and serving nothing else, except, maybe, coffee. To me it still seems better than most chowders made with fresh fish, and infinitely better than the thing, made without milk and seasoned with talcum powder or something similar, that masquerades as chowder on the menus of some New York City restaurants.

We thought Veblen liked the chowder. There was no way of telling. His general health certainly did not deteriorate under our cooking. If he got no fatter he got no leaner. Since Harry George was cleanly to the point of fastidiousness Veblen did not develop tuberculosis, either. Nor did William or I.

My contribution, or attempted contribution, to the menu was popovers. In theory the popover is simple. You take eggs, milk, flour, a little salt, a trifle of baking powder if you are under the Rumford influence. You then have something between gruel and mush, which you beat like hell for as long as you can stand it. Then you ladle it into a very hot muffin-tin and put the muffin-tin into a very hot oven. My Aunt Alice—and whenever I say this I mean William's Aunt Alice, too—achieved a popover so light a breath would almost blow it away, so tall it almost hit the top of the oven, crisp on the outside, pleasantly moist on the inside, and a dozen of them was not too much for a boy. She did this regularly, and without worry or effort. I never made a popover that in the least resembled hers, though I followed her recipe as closely as I could.

My popovers, it is true, would heave a little. I would open the oven door, and there they would be, plainly discontented, obviously trying to make something of themselves. But they never hitched higher than the rims of the little molds in the pan in

which I had placed them. They did not constitute true popovers, and calling them Twin Mountain muffins, as I sometimes did, was but a subterfuge. I believe the Professor ate them. He was not capable of putting them in his pocket. I do not think they did him any harm.

On one of these sad occasions I poured what was left of the batter into a deep pieplate, put it in the oven and tried to forget about it. When I took it out, a few hours later, it was decidedly flat and crisp, though not burned. For a week or so I left it around the kitchen as a kind of object lesson to myself. Then I removed it, which was easy to do because I had buttered the pan well and also because of its firm texture, and nailed it outside the kitchen door. Eventually the winter rains came. No noticeable erosion took place. The Professor stopped to look at it from time to time but did not comment. At last, several months later, I took it down, broke it up with a hammer and gave it to the hens. They worked hard at it, but for several days the pieces lay around. Gradually it disappeared, how I don't know.

I am not so humble as to say that this was a typical example of my cooking. It was just one of the things that happened. Several years later I was a good enough cook to hold a job with a road gang for a month, and then I quit before I was fired. The only trouble I had on that job was with my bread. I never did succeed in making good bread, and I have given up trying. My pies, compiled with the least possible manipulation of the crust, were excellent, and I think still would be if I made them instead of evading the issue by writing about them. I never seriously took up cake. Harry made a good-tasting angel food and a delicious devil's food cake, using the whites of eggs in one and the yolks in another in a fine symbolic fashion. The Professor ate both kinds as they appeared, but again we could not tell which he liked best, or whether he liked either of them. He certainly did not live to eat. Not our cooking, anyway.

Harry soon became the straw boss<sup>8</sup> in the kitchen, perhaps be-

<sup>8</sup> Common usage then, and I suppose now, in labor gangs. A straw boss in a gang is something like a corporal in the army. You can talk back to him but you generally do what he suggests.

cause William and I had other chores to attend to, perhaps because he had executive qualities and we hadn't. He did the ordering, with a careful eye to the Professor's bank account. I suspect that he wished to prove that his being there wasn't costing anything, and that he would have been willing to starve William and me to death to prove it. It wouldn't have done him any good to try, at least in my case, because I raided the kitchen whenever I felt like it, which was whenever I was in the vicinity between meals. I don't suppose my statement will be believed today, but it is none the less true that for one month, at least, in spite of all I could do, Harry kept the meat and grocery bill for the four of us down to forty dollars.

He was assisted in his economies by the fact that we had all the eggs, milk and cream we could use. The pregnant cow had duly delivered herself of a fine calf. When the appropriate moment came William and I undertook to wean the calf. First we relieved the anxious mother of several quarts of milk. Then, on Veblen's advice, we plunged the calf's head in the milk. The little creature came up spluttering and bawling. William dipped two fingers in the milk. The calf licked the fingers gratefully, but it was plain that the intake at this rate was too slow. At last the solution dawned on us. William inserted his fingers in the calf's mouth. I depressed the mouth and nose into the milk. A sucking process began. William removed the fingers. The calf went on drinking. From milk it progressed very soon to more solid fare, but it remained tame and appealing. We were village boys, not farm boys. We had to learn from the beginning.

The eggs remained a problem to the last. Prior to our arrival the henhouse had not always been closed at night, and the hens were exposed to various enemies, including, I think, weasels. They thought this over (I like hens and I believe they do think, though they try to hide their thoughts) and arrived at some natural conclusions. If they were not to have human protection they would not conform to human ways. Some of them took to roosting, and ultimately to making nests, in the thick tops of the cedars, sometimes fifteen or twenty feet above the ground. The Professor described this as atavistic. A hen is not any too fond of civilization,

apparently. But though the impulse was a natural one, and not uncommon among American hens when left to their own devices, it did make trouble. There were too many cedars and eggs are not imperishable.

The henhouse had a full-sized latched door for humans, and a small door, lifting upward on hinges, for hens. We began to shut these doors at night, in the hope that the hens would reform. Most of them did return to roost there. It was desirable that the little door should be opened at dawn, for the longer time the hens had to range and scratch for food the less the Professor would have to buy for them. But dawn came too early. No one wished to visit the henhouse at that hour. I therefore invented and perfected what came to be known at Cedro as the Artificial William. This consisted, in its first form, of a cord-and-weight arrangement attached to an alarm clock. When the alarm went off the weight came loose, pulled the cord and opened the door. Later I refined the apparatus by substituting a piece of bread on a string for the alarm clock. Of course this had to be rigged after the hens had had supper and definitely retired for the night. The first hen up in the morning, presumably at daybreak, would yawn, stretch and peck at the bread. This would release the weight, and the hens would be out hunting breakfast while we were still in bed.

The Professor knew about this arrangement. I rather hoped he would applaud my ingenuity, but he did not. William thinks that Veblen did not quite approve of the device. He may have had some rudiment of Puritanism which made him think that people ought not to exercise too much ingenuity to avoid getting up in the morning. More likely he doubted that the thing really worked as I said it did. Any intelligent weasel<sup>4</sup> could have sprung it. Yet I don't think we lost hens at night after that. I planned many times to make a definite check on the apparatus by being at the henhouse some morning just before sunrise. Something always happened to prevent.

Unhappily the hens, having tasted the delights of atavism, were

<sup>4</sup> William asks, were there weasels at Cedro, which is his way of saying there weren't. I will compromise on ferrets, foxes or mountain lions. Anything to keep peace in the family. I do know that something was getting those hens.

not easily cured of laying eggs in trees and other out-of-the-way places. We had egg hunts regularly, and sometimes we found as many as a dozen eggs, all extremely handsome, in one nest. Experience taught us a new technique. We put the eggs in water. If an egg stayed on the bottom it was good and could be poached. If one end tilted up it might be made into an omelet or scrambled. If it showed a tendency to rise but resisted fairly well it would be used in cake. If it floated at the top the hens got it back again, and we hoped it might be reprocessed and come through as a fresh egg.

The hens and cats were all fed at the kitchen door with what we had left over that we judged they might want. We had both species trained to come to a whistle. When one of us stepped outside the door and whistled there would be an avalanche of hens and cats from all directions—thousands of them, it seemed to me, though there were always about forty hens and considerably less than forty cats. In later life the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, as I saw it prior to the Roosevelt Administration, the depression and the S. E. C., reminded me of something. This was it. I don't mean to be jocular, either. It did.

In the course of the winter we raised a few chickens—or rather the hens did, for we didn't set them. One of them, before spring, developed into a fine little rooster, white in color and with but one visible defect—a tail assembly that was permanently bent about forty-five degrees to starboard. This rooster, when he moved with any velocity, tended to describe curves. I don't expect this statement to be believed, true though it is, but it is certainly according to the laws of aerodynamics.

In writing of these matters I am not really drifting away from Veblen. Nothing happened at Cedro that was not somehow related to him. I never doubted that he knew all that went on, whether among the humans or among the animals. I have heard him walking at night around the place, a strange, quiet, lonely man, stepping lightly and not disturbing whatever was there. I have seen him turn up in the daytime, so softly that he seemed to have taken form out of thin air. Yet he was never furtive. He had no fear of being surprised and no wish to surprise any one. He could not step heavily. He could not crash through any kind of underbrush. I have heard him drive in late at night. I can still hear the thin rattle of the carriage wheels on the gravel. Unless one of us went out to take the pony we would not hear him speaking to her, or anything more than the plop of hoofs on the floor of the barn and a whinny or two.

There he was. And there Cedro was. They did get on well together.

Veblen had wanted the ponies for saddle horses, though for convenience he used them in the cart. Sometimes we would saddle one for him. Beauty, like a few other saddle horses I have known, would draw in a long breath and hold it while she was being cinched. If one went on tightening the girth she had to let it out, and it issued in a prolonged and pitiful sigh. Then there was more slack to take up.

But before being saddled she had to be caught. The corral in which she and the other pony grazed covered two or three acres on the far side of the barn. Both ponies soon learned that when William or I appeared in the corral and tried to be friendly it meant

work. Harry set out to teach us to throw a rope, cowboy style, but neither William nor I ever became expert. We could hit a pony with the rope but no part of her was ever inside the loop. Catching Beauty meant a fine chase on foot, with each of us, pony and boy, trying to out-think the other. Veblen had casually let us know that he didn't wish us to ride the ponies, lest we spoil their gaits. He might as well have suggested that we stop whistling when we felt cheerful. So I began (and William did, too, I think, but I am not going to go into that) to experiment with mounting Beauty bareback at the far end of the corral, where I usually caught her, and riding her in. I also began falling off her.

For nine years, ever since I had had a ride on Roscoe Lynde's pony back home in Vermont (he was the son of the leading village storekeeper, who could afford such luxuries), I had wanted some kind of horse to ride. I had wanted to join the United States Cavalry. I didn't especially wish to fight Indians. I wished to be a cavalryman who had already fought Indians and was cashing in on the glory. As I grew older I learned that a mounted soldier spent most of his time dismounted, either currycombing his steed or cleaning out the stables. But I still wanted to become a good rider and cut a romantic figure on a horse. I wanted to ride down to the campus, bronzed, at ease on my unruly mount, my eyes seeking the far horizons, and have some extremely pretty coed ask who I was. I wasn't especially anxious to have her find out, being too diffident to do anything about it, even in my day dreams, but I wanted her to ask.

But I kept falling off Beauty.

Harry George explained over and over again how to ride. He despised the Eastern and English style of posting, in which the so-called rider rises to the animal's trot, clutching its neck between his knees and looking like a jack-in-the-box. I learned to despise it, too (and I still do), perhaps in part because it seemed to be a leisure class habit and I was learning from Veblen not to respect the leisure class. It was, and is, a sinister spectacle. Veblen said it was a hangover from the old mud roads of England, on which a hard trot was the best a horse could do, and the action of the poor beast in trying to pull its feet out of the mud naturally threw the rider

around. According to Veblen, a person who posted on horseback was indulging in a species of conspicuous expenditure of energy. I know there are those who argue that posting is easier on the horse. It would be easier still for those who insist on posting to get off and stay off.

For reasons like these I wished to ride cowboy style. This meant, Harry said, that at a hard trot no one would be able to slip a sheet of paper between me and the saddle. I tried to imagine some one trying. If they did I intended to frustrate them. The rider ought to be a part of the horse from the waist down, Harry said. I tried to be, but Beauty did not co-operate.

Riding a horse bareback is, of course, harder than riding it with a high-pommeled Western saddle. It is all very well to hang on to the mane, but if one hangs on too long one goes overboard directly under the horse's front end. The animal is then disposed to rear and strike out with its front hoofs. The best method is to ride as long as possible by balance alone and then fall off, choosing one's side and rolling clear. This takes some practice. It literally isn't easy to fall off a horse—safely, that is. An advantage in Beauty's case was that she was small and one didn't have far to go. I might not be here today if she had been two or three feet taller.

I counted on the Professor to remain in the house until I had finished practicing and got the saddle on and the bit in. Usually he did. Once he didn't. I had fallen off just behind the barn, after a too brisk gallop from the far end of the corral. This time I chose some hard, broken ground—adobe soil which had been trampled by the animals in its mud state, then dried to the rigidity of stone.<sup>1</sup> I came down so hard on my right hip that I wasn't able to sleep on that side for several weeks. I got up limping and using some of the words Harry George had taught me for such occasions. Then the Professor materialized. He looked serene and thoughtful.

"I fell off," I explained.

"So I see," he replied.

He said no more about the matter, and I took this as a tacit per-

<sup>1</sup> It used to be a saying in California that adobe was easy to work one day in the year. On the other three hundred and sixty-four days (three hundred and sixty-five in Leap Year) it was either too sticky or too hard. I have tried to spade it, both for money and for love, and have found the saying true.

mission to keep on with my experiments. There is no telling what he thought about it. He may have hoped that I would ougrow my foolishness, for, as every fall proved, I was still plastic. After a while, however, I was able to stay on most of the time without the saddle and all the time with a saddle. I can still stay on any horse, if it wears a Western saddle and doesn't do anything I don't care to have it do.<sup>2</sup>

I had a great liking for all the animals on the place—horses, cows, chickens and cats. They seemed an essential part of Cedro in their satisfaction at being alive. It was the harder for me, therefore, to accept the brutal side of this miniature ranch. Specifically, it was hard for me to kill a chicken. I had never killed anything but fish, and by the time I had caught any fish worth eating I was usually in a bad enough temper to kill it.

Domestic creatures were different. They were accustomed to not being killed. But there was no way out of it. I took a brooding hen off a nest and chopped her head off. I killed the funny little white rooster. I don't like to think about it. I don't like to write about it. It darkens my thoughts of Cedro to this day. These were my friends. Harry George fricasseed them, possibly with dumplings, and I helped him eat them with a good appetite. I would at that time have helped eat anything that had no smell, or bad smell, and that could be chewed and swallowed. But I had sympathized with the small bundles of life. It was possible, if you half-closed your eyes on a warm, sunny day at Cedro, to identify yourself with all the animate things around the place. You could feel like Buddha, absorbing all being into himself. When you chopped off some of this Being's heads, as you did when you killed chickens, you broke the spell. I had a little grudge against the Professor, for he didn't seem to mind. He accepted the facts of life. I didn't.

I didn't kill the calf. I saw the butcher's cart arrive and drive away. The butcher, in his cheerful California fashion, inherited,

<sup>2</sup> Three years later I used to exercise Professor Campbell's horse sometimes. It had a singlefooted gait so perfect that a seal could have ridden it bareback, flippers off. I singlefooted it up the Row at mail time, with dozens of pretty girls in sight. But by that time I was, naturally, three years older and a good many of my romantic notions had disappeared. And I never dared to make that horse cut up when there was any one around to see.

I suppose, from the old ranch days, left behind such of the calf's internal workings as were not then marketable. There were plenty of dogs, and even plenty of coyotes, and these were supposed to take up where the butcher left off. This would have been all right in this instance if I hadn't come too suddenly upon all that was left of our otherwise departed pet. A tiny muscle was still ticking. A biological major would no doubt have dissected out the muscle and a bit of surrounding tissue, placed it in a warm saline solution, and fed it with flies, angleworms or beef tea to see how long he could keep it ticking. A history major was more likely to shoot his lunch.

I mention the incident for what it reveals and is worth. My memory makes much of it. There is no sense in such memories, I know. The calf was a little bull, and by no means blue-blooded. Even if it had been a descendant of a bull that had come over in the *Mayflower* or one which had figured in the Revolutionary War Veblen couldn't have kept it and fed it. He had no desire to raise a dairy herd. Meat was the poor little thing's manifest destiny. And like many other sentimentalists in similar predicaments I went right on eating meat, including veal cutlets. I ate one-fourth of our pet calf, for its value was balanced against our butcher's bill.

I suppose I wanted time to stand still. I wanted to catch it as it was, and let all the living live, as all, small and great, man and beast, plainly desired to do. I did not care to grow any older, nor have any one else do so—or any thing else. I wished this life at Cedro to go on forever, though this was no admitted thought; indeed, we all planned for the future and talked about it. Maybe there was a shadow of fear over me, which V. P.'s death had deepened; and the death of even one of God's creatures was the death of all mankind, and my own.

Nature was cruel. I knew that and wouldn't let on to myself that I knew it. I wanted it not to be. The Professor at times shocked me because he accepted this calm cruelty in so matter-of-fact a way. I was too illogical to give him credit for the humorous gentleness with which he treated all animals, for I don't think he himself would have killed one; or for that quality in him that caused him to maintain this preposterous household and to give us

almost free rein in doing what we felt like doing. I suppose I read a general callousness into his philosophical materialism, as I came partially to understand what it was. Yet I instinctively included him in this idealized Cedro which I wished to preserve exactly as it was. I wouldn't have changed the Professor, the nucleus of our world, in any respect—not even in the respect I have been discussing. At the same time, without his ever suspecting it (and I am sure he would have been amiably flattered if he had suspected it) I often fought stubbornly against him. A sentimentalist and romantic could not help doing so, however ungrateful and inconsistent this was.

Of the three of us I believe Harry George came nearest to an emotional acceptance of Veblen's point of view. What was in Harry's mind, how much hope and how much despair, I don't know. There must have been some hope, or he would not have chanced this winter in the Santa Clara valley. He had his plans, or he would not have put in time on surveying and Spanish, when he had so little time for his adored philosophy and psychology. He meant to stay here as long as he could. Then he would go back to the dry country and work out-of-doors. Then he would return to Stanford for another try at education. This was the pattern of his life. In his buoyant moments I suppose he saw it continuing, and in his black moments he did not.

But if we humans thought of death the personality called Cedro was unaware of it. It brooded contentedly. One hen might be in the pot, but the clucking and cackling of the other hens went on as though each moment were forever. It was drowsy and peaceful, or, when an egg had been successfully laid or one of the roosters had accomplished a seduction, exultant. One calf was veal but the cows came in for the milking, switched their tails and chewed their cuds, and looked extremely complacent. Harry George might have an invisible enemy at his throat but he had time for jesting, and for obscenity, and for profound speculations, and for taking me down a peg when he thought I needed it.

"Mrs. X. says you're quite good-looking," he remarked one evening, after visiting a mutual friend of ours.

I tried to look modest and incredulous.

"Well, she's mistaken," he went on, with a pleased smile. "You aren't, you know. Your ears stick out. The lower part of what you call your face is heavy. Right now you look about as silly as I've ever seen you." He paused thoughtfully. "You look a little like a horse," he concluded.

Harry liked horses. So this wasn't exactly an insult. It wasn't exactly a compliment, either.

I had formed the habit of cutting off the tops of lemons, slashing up the insides with a knife, filling them with lump sugar, and sucking them. Harry thought this was barbarous and, together with my other food habits, would soon bankrupt the Professor. "What do you think you do that is worth all you eat?" he asked.

In short, we were very good friends by this time, all three of us, though I think Harry picked on me rather than on William because I was younger and less responsible, and seemed to him more in need of education. I decided that if sleeping in a tent was good for Harry it was good for me, and I moved my cot and blankets over to his place. I slept without a pillow to keep from being round-shouldered, and to show that I could endure hardship. We had long, long talks, there in the silence. I have always liked sleeping out of doors, ever since I got over my distrust of things that go about in the night. When it rained we went to sleep to one of the loveliest sounds on earth, in a tent that doesn't leak too much—the delicate, many-fingered tapping of drops on canvas.

## 8

As I confessed earlier in this narrative, most of what Veblen said to us is gone forever. With my brother's help I have remembered a little, and probably not the most important part. William, as I said, later took a course under the Professor and made notes on it. We did not realize that a great man off guard, as Veblen sometimes was at Cedro, might be more interesting than a great man on guard. We were not Boswells. We made no notes at Cedro.

I happen to have kept my old college report cards—I don't know why, except that after leaving college I never had time to throw them away. In fact, I have never had as much time as I had when I was working my way through college. I see that I started elementary hygiene in my first semester, and dropped it, partly because I did not wish to dissect a cat. William and I both signed up for gymnasium exercises, I suppose on the theory that if we did not take them we would get soft and fat. They were not required and we soon gave them up. William states that the gymnasium was so cold and draughty in the California winter that he thought it a menace rather than an aid to health.

I continued tanking up on history, which the Professor hinted was foolish, because any one could read history at any time and in almost any place. I was taking conversational French, and if I didn't get a good French accent I got one that people in France many years later took for Russian. I was studying elementary German by the natural method, so-called, which went on the theory that if you read enough German, fast enough, without looking the words up in the dictionary, you would sooner or later make sense out of it. I didn't, though I did learn some German songs that have stayed with me.

I was also taking a short story course under Professor Seward. The thought behind this was that I would learn to write short stories so well that after graduation I could retire to some congenial spot and do nothing else. I would get up when I chose and go to bed when I chose. I would become modestly famous. My stories were not worse than those of other members of the class. This was before the day when college students wrote publishable stories, novels and plays. We were all ingenuous, I don't know why. Some of us had certainly had enough experience with life in the raw to be able to write about it if we had wished. We didn't seem to wish.

I wrote a short story about an oldish gentleman (I pictured him as thirty years old if he was a day) who married a young lady, and then found that his closest friend, a young man of about the young lady's age, also loved her. My hero was considerably upset by this discovery, and when he said good night to his wife and retired to the other room (they lived in a two-room-and-kitchen cabin) to his own lonely bunk it used to keep him awake. So when he fell into the river at floodtime and the other two believed him drowned he went off somewhere and let them think it. This seemed to me, as it had to Tennyson, the only thing he could do under the circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

Another of my stories was about a newspaperman who could only write well when he was drunk. His city editor sent him out on a tug to cover a little story about a shipwreck, as city editors often did in those days. What he wrote caused the city editor to bite his pipestem in two, made the front page, and brought him immediate offers of book publication. But he had been drunk when he wrote it, and getting drunk was wrong. So he swore off, sank lower and lower, and wound up as a scantily paid drudge,<sup>2</sup> putting heads on other men's stories.

<sup>1</sup> The editor of the campus literary monthly filched this one from Professor Seward's desk and published it without asking my consent. No other editor has ever been so eager.

<sup>2</sup> When I became a newspaperman I found that I had not overdrawn this aspect of the journalistic profession. I began at fifteen dollars a week. But I also found that some of the best reporters managed to get away with a good deal of liquor without hurting either their work or their consciences. Of course this was a long time ago, and in San Francisco.

The Veblen influence, I think, showed, though imperfectly, in one other bit of fiction I wrote during the Cedro period. It was about a young man who got a job in a factory making some kind of gasoline engine. The boss had his eye on him and I think the boss had a pretty daughter. But my young man found that engines were being shipped out with cracks in their cylinders. He was up against big business in its ugliest mood. Should he keep silent, get promoted to foreman and marry the boss's daughter? Or should he denounce the old fraud, give up the girl and go out to tramp the streets looking for work? I answered those questions.

I continued with this sort of thing all that winter and the following summer. I was hell bent on being a short story writer. It was quite beyond my powers at that time to see that if I stopped going to classes and concentrated on setting down in the fullest possible detail everything that Veblen said and did (that I knew about or could reasonably assume) I would have had a treasure. I might have had to wait a long time for its whole value to accrue. But I waited, anyhow.

I have mentioned these circumstances because I am trying to tell the truth. I am now faced with the problem of trying to suggest just what the Professor did talk about. He must have said a good deal, because, although there were some evenings at the dinner table when we ate in silence, there were other evenings when we sat down at half-past six or thereabouts and didn't get up till ten. What he said must have fascinated us, because we never wanted him to stop.

A bad evening would be like the one when I asked the Professor whether he thought it worth while to study Greek. I had studied it just long enough to learn what the letters on the fraternity and sorority houses were, but I thought it would be pleasant to read Homer in the original. I still think that. The Professor said he didn't know. William says this may have been the same evening that he, as a beginning student of economic theory, said he didn't see why rent wasn't a component in the cost of production. He got the same answer. The Professor didn't know. He didn't admit that night that he knew anything about any subject.

But some nights he did know, though rarely or never in answer

to direct questions. I can clearly visualize the scene on such occasions: the low-ceiled dining-room, all windows on two sides; myself on one flank of the table, facing Harry George; Harry very earnest and attentive, and trying not to make noises; William leaning forward in his chair at the end nearest the kitchen, respectful but sliding in a remark now and then to keep the Professor going; Veblen half turned in his chair, perhaps with his right arm over the back, speaking slowly in a soft, well-modulated voice. It would be quiet outside. I don't suppose any place outside the polar regions is as quiet now as Cedro Cottage was in those days.

It is not the thunder of Veblenian doctrines that comes back to me. It is a few rather trivial things. He wrote and published the doctrines, anyhow, the way he wanted them. A casual listener could not add much.

He talked a little about his own life. He had pride in his Norwegian background. I think Joseph Dorfman<sup>3</sup> is right in his belief that this background, which Veblen's parents clung to in their culturally isolated Norwegian community in Minnesota, accounted for much of Veblen's philosophical detachment from American life. He was like an enlightened savage in a civilized country, or an enlightened explorer in a savage country, viewing it critically, understanding it very well but not belonging to it. No college sophomore could be expected to formulate such an explanation. We did, I think, feel his detachment, which accounted for his speaking of so many respectable persons and institutions as though they belonged in a zoo, yet which kept him from being emotional about them. He was a kind of god—a minor god, possibly, but still a god—considering things mundane with humorous disapproval. He did not denounce institutions. He was not indignant at strutting figures of men. They just seemed ridiculous to him.

He mentioned Norway once in a while, and with great respect. I remember his speaking of lands which had been in the same peasant family for a thousand years. The thought seemed pleasing to him. I think he liked the idea of peasant self-reliance and in-

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Dorfman: *Thorstein Veblen and His America*. A careful summary of Veblen's life and ideas, to which I am indebted and to which I shall refer again. Indispensable to any one interested in the man. Viking. 1934.

genuity. It tickled him to imagine these plain people thumbing their noses at the lords and lordlings while others bowed down and knighthood was in flower. Apparently he could talk to farmers and working people more easily than he could to so-called intellectuals. He told us once of conversing with an Icelandic fisherman in Icelandic (which I suppose means an archaic Danish), and how when the man wanted to swear he had to break over into English to do it.

He said little about his young days. He did mention his father once. He said that when the elder Veblen went to town on a market day and happened to meet his son on the street he did not speak to him or give any sign of recognition. I gathered that the Professor thought this interesting but not extraordinary. If a man had nothing to say there was no use in talking, even to his own son. Of course Veblen might have enlarged upon this item to explain his own reticence, but I am not sure that he considered himself unduly reticent. He just didn't indulge in small talk—unless with women, and of that I cannot speak.

He told us of an incident of his first teaching days. He had a student in one of his classes (a Latin-American, I believe he said) who was a leader in trouble-making on the very first day. Veblen said he thought about the matter a little while and then went down the aisle, lifted the boy from his seat by the coat-collar and threw him out. After that he didn't have any trouble. The way to get on with students, he declared, was to get the jump on them at the first meeting. Otherwise they got the jump on you. We listened gravely, as though we were not ourselves students. He made us feel like detached observers.

He passed on to the subject of college classes. During his first semester at Stanford an impression had gotten round that Veblen's course would be a pipe.<sup>4</sup> Quite a number of leisurely-minded young men had drifted in. One of them, a renowned football player, went by a name that somewhat resembled Morphino, and because of his habit of relaxing in class was called that. This amused Veblen, but he did not care to preside over a dormitory.

<sup>4</sup> A pipe-dream. Hence, no work.

The ideal situation for a professor, he appeared to think, was not to have any students at all.<sup>5</sup> The next best was to have few, and those few awake. Veblen took steps to make this possible. Each applicant for registration had a personal interview with him. During this interview Veblen would paint the required work in the most horrific terms. The pipe-hunting undergraduate, who, after all, merely wished to get through college with the least bother to anybody, would turn pale, wriggle in his chair, and go away, never to return.

Veblen would chuckle when he told us things like these, letting us in on his professional secrets. I don't remember hearing him laugh out loud. His chuckle had a Puck-like or Pan-like quality in it, as though he were thinking what fools these mortals were, but got a certain enjoyment out of watching them perform. He didn't hate Morphino any more than he hated the hens or the cats. Morphino, as a phenomenon, as a sort of nether millstone in the machine of intercollegiate competition, interested him. It was Morphino miscast as a student that he couldn't abide.

He talked more like a scientist than an economist. He might spend a few minutes explaining to us how to control a corporation, in case we ever wanted to. You did not have to have fifty-one per cent of the voting stock, he assured us. You could count on this and that, and run the thing without difficulty. But the subject did not keenly interest him. Nor me, either. My opinion was that there ought not to be corporations.<sup>6</sup> We used to refer witheringly to the United States *Steal* Corporation, which was then quite new and was capitalized at a billion dollars—at that time a large sum of money. William knew a solemn young man who was going to be a broker. I stared at this young man as though he were training himself for forgery. Or perhaps for the possibly less genteel profes-

<sup>5</sup> He nearly succeeded. Dorfman, cited above, says that registration in Veblen's courses at Stanford varied from three to twelve, and that Will Camp was his only student in one five-hour thesis course. They didn't know what they were missing.

<sup>6</sup> William says he felt differently. If it hadn't been for corporations and trusts he couldn't have taken a very interesting course taught by Professor Whitaker, which some of the members of the class referred to as Corruptions and Rusts. Even in those days, William liked to understand things. I didn't, not always. And if there was anything in the institutional line that I didn't or couldn't understand I was against it. I had fun while this lasted. It made life simpler.

sion of a procurer. After one had listened to Veblen for a while brokers did seem so dull, so stupid, so useless. When I met some, years later, I was surprised to find several who were intelligent and well-meaning, and seemingly without a consciousness of guilt. Of course this was before the great depression of 1929, when people began to feel sorry for brokers.

Veblen said, I think more than once, as though the idea pleased him, that he had been "brought up in a laboratory." If he had been in the habit of advising us, which he wasn't, I am sure he would have urged us to put in all the time we could in laboratories and let the reading courses slide. He knew a great deal about anthropology, as, of course, his writings show. I happened to be reading an interesting little primer on the subject, in connection with some course, I don't recall which. He scoffed politely when I mentioned it. I think what he objected to was the author's assumption that civilized man was an improvement on the so-called savages and barbarians. Veblen didn't think so.

Harry George was a liberated soul who believed in nothing, except, possibly, William James. The Professor couldn't shock him. He could shock me because, though I had a sentimental acceptance of what I supposed was socialism and even as a high school student had sometimes questioned things taken for granted by my Sunday school teachers, I had clung to some fragments of my early religious faith. I thought, for instance, there was, or had better be, a God.<sup>7</sup> The Professor said, or quoted some one as saying, that any good mechanic would have been ashamed if he had made such a contraption as the human eye. This statement startled me. I had believed that an eye was a pretty competent job. I followed the thought along a little. There was a world of disillusionment in it. If we were made in the image of God the divine eyes must be imperfect, too. Maybe we were just another animal, and not made by anybody.

I was inclined to think well of Nature. One could at Cedro, especially if one went around with his eyes half-shut and just listened to things hum. The Professor brought up the case of the

<sup>7</sup> Possibly I was right in at least the second part of my conclusion.

ichneumon fly.<sup>8</sup> He had seen one somewhere, maybe not at Cedro. I hope not at Cedro. Even a fly couldn't fool Veblen. This creature, Veblen explained—that is to say, the female—would have her fun and get her eggs fertilized. Then she would go around looking for a caterpillar. When she found one she would lay her eggs in one of the caterpillar's segments. The caterpillar might know that something had happened, but would not know what. It would go about its business, troubled by sensations which it might attribute to an acid stomach or overwork, until the eggs hatched. Then the little ichneumon grubs would start eating the caterpillar, which, being alive, had kept fresh without refrigeration. The caterpillar would then realize what had happened, but it would be too late.

Even Harry George was indignant about this, and he always referred to the ichneumon as the inhuman fly. Again I was startled and worried. What was one to think of the beauty of this world, and of our little Cedro microcosm, if such things were going on in it? There was a struggle in my mind. Cedro, to me, seemed happy. But a caterpillar which was serving as a nursery and grocery store for ichneumon flies couldn't be happy. And if there were a God He was letting the flies get away with murder. The ground I walked on, the air around me, might be full of such hideous injustices. I didn't like it at all. I don't know that Veblen cared whether or not I liked it. In a way he was a kind of ichneumon fly himself, planting troublesome ideas in people's heads where there hadn't been any before.

He got on the subject of translating the Bible. My mother had read the whole of the Old Testament to William and me when we were boys. She didn't accept literally such stories as that of Jonah and the whale, but she had a simple, beautiful faith in the essentials. If her logic led her to question some of them she thought she might be wrong. It wasn't easy for us to believe that she had been fooling herself. But Veblen picked out the familiar text in Ecclesiastes: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while

<sup>8</sup> It was years before I learned how to spell this insect, but now I can. I have thought about it a good many times. It is all very well to talk about a "life stuff" which is fairly indifferent to the form it occupies, but it is not easy to make a nice world out of such stuff.

the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." He said the Hebrew version had been misread, and that it had a purely physical application. It meant, he said, that a man had better utilize his sexual powers when he was young, because when he was old he might not be able to. In fact, as Harry George once said, he might not be able to do more than brag about what he had accomplished in his prime; and Harry said some old men he had worked with had not been able to talk about much else.

I think Veblen also mentioned some other instances. He gave me the impression that the translation of the Bible had been about as badly botched as the construction of the human eye. Since there was then no doubt in my mind that he could read the Old Testament in the original Hebrew and the new in the original Greek, and probably had done so, possibly memorizing them as he went along, I couldn't doubt him. Harry George, who considered me much too pious, caught my eye and snickered noiselessly.

Sometimes the Professor let his mind play with scraps of information, with no apparent moral. One of them was Dundonald's Destroyer, and as this supposed invention captivated me at the time I will give it here as he described it. It was, he said, the device of an English naval officer for doing away with enemy ships at a distance. It might have been a projected heat beam, which would set them on fire. The legend was that the British Admiralty sat in debate on Dundonald's suggestion and decided that it was too awful, and that they would stick to the time-honored methods of killing enemy seamen by cannon-fire, musketry and drowning.

I find, on looking into the matter, that the story has been doubted. Dundonald may have said that he had such an invention, but this is not the same as there actually being one; the statement would make Dundonald, who had had his troubles, feel good, and wouldn't hurt any one else. I also believe, as I watch the development of the art of war, that humanity, including the side of truth and justice in a pinch, would not reject any efficient method of slaughter. Possibly this is one point on which even Veblen was naive. And possibly I am being naive in suspecting that he was.

I liked some of his economic disquisitions, though I know now

that some of them were not original with him, and that others he had used in his books. He painted a vivid picture, one evening, of the robber barons on the Rhine, who used to come down and collect tariffs from passing merchants; and he added that they were not much different from any other internal revenue agents. Robber barons were fresh and new to me then. It was the first I had heard of them. I liked them a lot, and almost wished I was back in medieval times and was one—a rather good-natured and picturesque one, of course.

Veblen told the familiar story (at least it is familiar now) of the farmer who had a mud hole in the road in front of his house. At first he used to get out his oxen and haul travelers out of the mud because he was sorry for them. So many got stuck that he felt justified in charging a little to cover expenses and overhead. After a while he gave up his farm work and specialized in hauling people out of the hole. When a dry season came his income fell off. He thought about this, and then took to bringing water from the creek after dark to keep the mud hole in revenue-producing condition.

Veblen believed<sup>9</sup> that a great deal of modern business was maintaining mud holes for the purpose of charging people to be hauled out of them. Once this suspicion is implanted in an adolescent mind it is very hard to get it out. But I didn't care. I had already proved, to my own satisfaction and to that of every one who had ever watched me try to sell things, that I wouldn't do well in business. Naturally I didn't wish to think too highly of those who did do well.

In fact, Veblen couldn't shock any one of the three of us by anything he said about the capitalistic system, even when he said it wasn't a system. We had seen it from the bottom up. No institution is at its best when viewed in that fashion. Veblen did shock me one evening, however, when he remarked that there was one thing to be said for capitalism. "It works," he declared. But I don't think he meant those words to be taken as expressing moral

<sup>9</sup>This was, of course, the theme of *The Theory of Business Enterprise*. The gangsters of Chicago and other cities who first made "protection" necessary and then sold it would have provided him with another good illustration.

approval.<sup>10</sup> He meant that the mud-hole plan kept people occupied. It was a change from coming down on horseback to take the merchants' money away from them by force, but it wasn't necessarily, he implied, any better.

In those days, certainly, he wasn't boosting any man's Utopia. He had smiled at Mrs. Wilson's devotion to Karl Marx, and I doubt that any naive remarks about socialism which were let fall at his table ever lighted him up. Nor did he ever moralize. When he used such phrases as the conscientious withholding of efficiency (or, when he talked to us, their equivalent in simpler language) he had a scientific conception of conscience, not a religious one. He saw it, I am sure, as a desire to win approval. A workman paid by the piece or an industrialist producing for a controlled market might honestly think it wrong to turn out too much. In the case of the workman he might bring the piece rate down to a point where his slower or less gifted fellow-workers, let alone himself, might be injured. In the case of the industrialist he might bring prices down, hurt a lot of innocent stockholders, including the usual widows and orphans, squeeze out marginal producers who were doing their best, and raise hell generally. Who wouldn't withhold efficiency under these circumstances?

No, the Veblen of those days, as we at Cedro listened to him, was no crusader. He well knew how complex life was, and was, of course, endlessly interested in the institutions under which men lived. He loved to watch human nature operating under various conditions—the more absurd the conditions the more he was intrigued. A perfect civilization would not have amused him as the actual one did. He would have been bored. At Cedro he was not only aware of living in an imperfect society, but he had his own private troubles. He wasn't bored, I'm sure.

His interest in personalities was shown by the almost affectionate manner in which he spoke of Charles G. ("Charlie") Lathrop, who by virtue of being the late Mrs. Stanford's brother was then

<sup>10</sup> William reports a similar remark that Veblen made about a certain university president on whose faculty he had served. He said that the president's test of truth was, "Will it work?" William is sure Veblen didn't wish this comment to be taken as expressing moral approval, either. In this case Veblen was bitter and I believe unfair, and this for personal reasons. He came down from Olympus once in a while.

treasurer and business manager of the University. Mr. Lathrop lived in a big house on the hill back of the campus. Nature had undoubtedly endowed him with many gifts, but among these the gift of attending sympathetically to the needs of a university had not been included. His honesty was hardly questioned, though Veblen did express misgivings as to the business acumen of Mr. Lathrop and the trustees in securing a remarkably small annual revenue from what was then considered a remarkably large endowment fund.<sup>11</sup>

But the real trouble was that both faculty and student body were convinced that Mr. Lathrop didn't like them. Most of them reciprocated this feeling. The undergraduates had had respect and affection for Mrs. Stanford, for she had had an honest interest in young people. When the endowment funds were tied up in litigation in the early days, after Senator Stanford's death, she had made personal sacrifices to keep the university going. Loyalty to her showed itself even after her own departure from this world. She hadn't wanted smoking on the Quadrangle. So there was no smoking there—the ban became a Stanford tradition. But the students couldn't and didn't love Charlie Lathrop.<sup>12</sup> It was the faculty's belief that he regarded college teachers as a kind of useless upper servant class, pensioners on the Stanford estate. It was the students' firm conviction that he had said that the only thing wrong with the University was that it had students. I suppose he would have preferred horses. The Senator in his day had raised fine horses on the Stanford farm, and they didn't go howling around at night the way students did. I guess Charlie Lathrop

<sup>11</sup> At that time it was commonly believed to be thirty million dollars and was rumored to be earning about one per cent a year. I believe Veblen put it at that. I don't say the statement is true. If it is true there were no doubt all sorts of reasons for the situation. I just say it is surprising how poor a university with a large endowment can sometimes manage to be. Of course the earthquake had caused losses which had to be replaced out of funds that might otherwise have been devoted to education. It might also have affected the rate of return on the endowment.

<sup>12</sup> Mr. Lathrop had a tendency toward corpulence. A student editor left Stanford by request during my time there. There had been some kind of controversy over something the students had asked for and that Mr. Lathrop had indignantly refused. The young editor expressed the hope that some day "Charlie Lathrop would fall down and teeter to death." Even the faculty missed that promising youth when he had to pack up and say good bye.

wanted a little peace and order on the farm, and having a university there wasn't the way to get it. No doubt he was cross about it all at times.

But Veblen came near liking him, perhaps because Lathrop was a simple sort of man, with few pretensions to being other than he was. Veblen had encountered the Treasurer and Business Manager when he rented Cedro, a university property. He got on amicably enough with him. Veblen said one evening that Mr. Lathrop was worried about the condition of the footbridge leading across San Francisquito Creek to Cedro. The county road had once run that way, as the abutments of the old highway bridge still remained to prove, but Senator Stanford had had the road re-routed and had built this thing in the place of the old bridge. Or the old bridge had washed out. The footbridge was of the suspension type and naturally shaky. If Veblen rode Beauty down to the campus, as he sometimes did, he could save a mile or two by going this way instead of around by the re-routed county road.

"Mr. Lathrop has been out looking at the bridge," Veblen remarked. "He told me there were hoof-marks on it and that he was pretty sure some one had been taking horses over it. He said this was dangerous and ought to be stopped. I said I thought so, too."

He looked around at us and beamed. I thought for a moment he was going to laugh out loud.

I don't believe, though, that Veblen would have changed Charlie Lathrop in a single respect, if he had had the power. He preferred him as he was. I am not sure, though the idea has been late in coming to me, that Veblen didn't suspect that Lathrop was in some ways right. Lathrop thought Stanford was too much like a country club, and so did Veblen. Lathrop thought a university ought to be run by business men on business principles. Veblen thought it ought to be run by scholars for the pursuit of learning. Lathrop was more nearly on the winning side, taking higher education at that time (and perhaps later) as a whole, but both men were outsiders at Stanford. There could have been a kind of tolerant understanding between them.

In matters of educational theory Veblen wasn't far from the point reached by a few progressive college presidents and teachers

more than thirty years later. Once he described the "pass" and "honors" system prevailing in the English universities. Under that system, he explained, boys who didn't want an education didn't have to have one. Those who did want one could get one. I can see now that he was playing with some of the ideas he later advanced in his *Higher Learning in America*, and which had something to do with the establishment of the New School for Social Research in New York City. He said he had no objection to persons like Morphino playing football, but he doubted that it was worth while to provide them with libraries, laboratories and professors that they obviously had no use for. He thought there might be colleges without libraries, laboratories or professors to which Morphino and his like could go, and, somewhere else, where it was quiet, real colleges without football fields, cheering sections, paid athletic coaches, athletic scholarships or college spirit, where young persons who wished to be educated might attend.

Maybe Veblen was conducting a little university of this sort at Cedro, with William, Harry George and myself as students. But I don't know that he was doing this deliberately. He made no apparent effort. He talked when he felt like it and didn't talk when he didn't feel like it. When he talked he revealed attitudes. Being Veblen he revealed Veblenian attitudes.

An effect was certainly produced. For me, it continued to be disturbing. I had read a good deal. Staying out of school for a year between high school and college I had read books that I imagined would enable me to impress my professors when I got to college—things like *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, almost all of Parkman's narratives, biographies of English writers, some Shakespeare (but Milton threw me for a loop), but no science and little economics. I had tried to acquire what I took to be culture. A non-conformist in some things, I had been a strict conformist in this.

Now Veblen came along and swept most of my culture away, not by making dogmatic statements but by his tacit assumptions. He cleaned me out, probably without knowing or caring that he

was doing it. The process was not painless. As I said a little earlier, I fought against it. Veblen's world often appeared to me hard and empty. It was stripped of the imaginative mist in which I like to have my world done up.

I wanted a kind of Indian summer world. I do not know that I can make this notion clear. I remember, a little after the Cedro period, sitting or lying one afternoon on the shore of Lagunita,<sup>13</sup> while some kind of water sports were going on. A student named Pemberton was making the announcements in a roaring bass voice, which I idly envied. Looking across the lake I seemed to be gazing into the depths of a forest, sliding on toward the brown hills which, in turn, rose to the saw-toothed Coast Range. I knew perfectly well what I should find if I went in that direction—dusty roads and a pleasant countryside, nothing in any way mysterious.

But it *was* mysterious. It was outside of time. Pemberton's big voice was not announcing a bunting contest. It was a battle cry. There were horsemen riding. Steel glittered among the trees. Perhaps a good-looking girl down the slope a few yards away, unconscious of my attention, was in some way involved with this riding and this steel. She wasn't, in my mind, intent on what she might wear at the next Roble At Home.<sup>14</sup> She was mixed up in these goings on, outside of time.

Nothing came of this. Nothing could. But this was the sort of daydreaming you didn't do in Thorstein Veblen's presence. The quality, or weakness, that made you do it shrank into a small corner of your soul when he talked. The process could be ex-

<sup>13</sup> Stanford's part-time lake, fed by water from the Searsville Reservoir. Sometimes it was there and sometimes it was not, depending on how much water could be spared. Sometimes you could swim in it or even get drowned in it and sometimes you could walk across it.

<sup>14</sup> Roble was the girls' dormitory. Its At Homes would be thought pretty awful by today's undergraduates. Maybe they were. Its inmates tended to be either poor or intelligent or sometimes both. The sorority girls were often neither, but they were likely to be more stylish. President David Starr Jordan once found a girl crying under a Roble (pronounced Ro-bly, "o" as in "oh") window. It was after ten o'clock at night and the girls couldn't be out that late without special permission and she had no special permission. If she rang the bell and the matron caught her she would be disciplined. So President Jordan boosted her in through the window and went home.

hilarating. And it hurt. It did hurt. My soul had bruises all over it.

So Veblen pushed his chair back and we all got up. Veblen disappeared into his part of the house, where maybe he wrote and maybe he read, and maybe he had his lonely moments.

And William and Harry and I went out into the kitchen to attend to the dishes.

## 9

Besides listening to Veblen's conversation, when there was any, I had one other means of becoming acquainted with his philosophy. I cannot say that I made the most of the opportunity, but it didn't leave me unmarred. While I was learning the printing trade in H. C. Whitehill's stationery and magazine store (once he also had a line of chinaware), printing shop and newspaper office in my home town in Vermont<sup>1</sup> I learned to operate a typewriter. I did this on Sundays, and at other odd moments when Mr. Whitehill was not around, being under the impression that he didn't care to have me experiment with a delicate and valuable machine. H. C. was cleverer than I knew. When I dragged my accomplishment out into the open he pounced upon it and I was trapped. I began to typewrite copy and letters for him, and I have never been long free from the typewriter since.<sup>2</sup>

Veblen, naturally curious as to whether there was any manual operation that I was good at, unearthed my modest skill with the typewriter. He wanted to know if I would care to copy some

<sup>1</sup> William worked, too, during his high school days. He learned the grocery trade in Charlie Haines' store. I shall not go into the matter of William and Steve Guptil and the keg of beer in the cellar. I don't suppose the customers ever noticed anything, except that William and Steve were almost invariably good natured, and the more so as the day wore on. William says that I ought to go into this matter far enough at least to be fair to Steve, who never needed beer to make him good natured. Neither of them did. But they thought it helped, and there was something about living in a prohibition state, as Vermont then was, that made beer attractive.

<sup>2</sup> The longest gap was my college years. I never had regular access to a typewriter for my own work while I was in college. But I remembered the keyboard pretty well, and though I never learned the touch system I can write a clause like this without looking at the keys. For me it is pen and pencil that are mechanical, not the typewriter. Which suggests to me that some of our thoughts about machines are probably goofy. A fountain pen is just as much a machine as a typewriter. The stylus of the ancient Babylonians was a machine, and it probably took their minds off what they were writing and hampered their style.

manuscripts of his. I could have the use of a machine at the university executive offices. There was to be no "cash nexus." When I wasn't typing I wouldn't be working around Cedro—that was all.

Nothing I had so far done at Cedro had been of a nature to impress Veblen. Now I was able to do something that I think Veblen himself couldn't manage, and that William and Harry George certainly couldn't. I took Veblen's pages of manuscript, in a handwriting not difficult to figure out, dashed down to the campus on my bicycle and set to work. I worked hard and long. I recall typing one day from early in the morning until late in the afternoon without stopping for lunch. There was no reason why I shouldn't have stopped for lunch. I merely wanted to show off and do an amount of work that would astound the Professor.

It never did. When I told him I had finished a batch of typing he took it, nodded gravely and thanked me. That was all. He did ask me once, I believe, whether or not I could type faster than I could think.<sup>3</sup> I don't know what I answered. The question really bothered me. I know that I did not understand the whole of the essays I copied. With no training either in economics or in logic I couldn't. When a word was beyond me I did not bother to look it up. When an idea was beyond me I let it pass. I obeyed the old printer's instructions, which were to follow copy even if it went out the window or up the chimney. Yet, curiously enough, I believe I mastered the Veblen language to a certain extent by this process. It must have soaked into my brain with no conscious effort on my part, as the mother tongue is absorbed by a child. When, some years later, I began seriously to read Veblen I did not find the style difficult; and I have always been surprised by the number of people, all wiser, more learned and less lazy than myself, who said it was.<sup>4</sup>

I don't know how many of Veblen's papers and essays I copied. Recently I have tried to identify some of them, but I have to do this largely by noting the dates of those that have been pub-

<sup>3</sup> During my early years in newspaper work I could. But age has slowed me down. Now I can think faster than I can type.

<sup>4</sup> William makes this note: Once one understands that Veblen intends to use language as "an instrument of precision," as Veblen himself expressed it, instead of a device for scattering superficial generalities, one need not find his style difficult.

lished.<sup>5</sup> For instance, I am sure that I dealt with his article on Prof. Irving Fisher's theory of capital and income, published in 1908. I recognize some words and concepts that stumped me: "There is no intention here to decry taxonomy, of course"; "The absolute merits of the hedonistic (classical-Austrian) economic theory need not be argued here"; "But, concretely, there is not always a consensus of imputations"—and so on.

I was more permanently impressed, in spite of some difficulties, by two long papers on *The Nature of Capital*.<sup>6</sup> As I re-read these essays now I know that certain points in them stayed with me. There were two opposing reasons for this. If, as Mr. Dorfman thinks, Veblen was a product of the transplanted Norwegian culture, I was equally a product (and William, too) of the agrarian, small-local-industry culture of Vermont. I was the son of a skilled workman and had been used to seeing independent farmers, carpenters, blacksmiths, machinists and granite cutters at their labors. I could feel dumbly what the instinct of workmanship was, even though I did not grasp the full weight of Veblen's application of it. William had more of it in his fingers than I. He had the makings of a thoroughly competent artisan, though fate made him an economist and teacher. But I had at least a respect for artisanship, together with an active set of prejudices against those who snubbed it or took advantage of it. I still have both the respect and the prejudices.

Others of Veblen's ideas offended me, if that is the proper word to use in describing the effect of a great man on an adolescent. Still others merely entertained me.

I run through the pages now, and things jump out at me. "The relation of the Plains Indian to the buffalo": Veblen talked about that, I think, and when, years later, I encountered the remarkable fact of such tribes as the Sioux and the Cheyenne living on, and off, the buffalo, the herds never growing and never diminishing until efficient firearms came in, the idea was familiar.

<sup>5</sup> I rely largely on *Essays in Our Changing Order*, edited by Leon Ardzrooni and published in 1934; and on *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization*, selected by Leon Ardzrooni, Wesley C. Mitchell and Walter W. Stewart and published in 1919.

<sup>6</sup> In *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization*, cited above.

Veblen spoke of capitalism as "an innovation." Until the moment I typed those words, and in spite of my dabbling in sentimental socialism, I had thought of our economic system as something extending centuries into the past. I now saw that it had changed and would change.<sup>7</sup> And this was an eye-opener. I have never since been able to think of economic society as static. Because of those two words of Veblen's I have been in one sense more a conservative, not seeing the necessity for violent revolutionary movements, and in another sense more a radical, believing that change must come and that one must do what one can to make it a change for the better.

Veblen spoke of the "slight technological proficiency" possessed by the "capitalist-employer," and, on the other hand, described the "common laborer" as "a highly trained and widely proficient workman when contrasted with the conceivable human blank supposed to have drawn on the community for nothing but his physique." I ate that up. I had done common labor. I had shoveled dirt in a high wind, partly into a wagon and partly down my own neck. I had handled timber, and there is a way to do it without, as the very literal expression has it, busting a gut. I had been fired by an Irish straw boss with a hard blue eye and an obvious contempt for us underlings.

Veblen said that it was "still possible for an appreciable fraction of the population to 'pick up a living,' more or less precariously, without recourse to the large-scale processes that are controlled by the owners of the material assets." William, V. P., Harry George and I had all proved that point. Certainly it was possible. And certainly it was precarious.

Veblen referred to "a large volume of capital goods whose value lies in their turning the technological inheritance to the injury of mankind," and cited "naval and military establishments, together with the docks, arsenals, schools and manufactories of arms, ammunition and naval and military stores that supplement and supply such establishments." I agreed. I was not a non-resistant, but I was the rip-snorting kind of pacifist who believed that armies and navies were maintained to keep the

<sup>7</sup> It did.

people from getting their rights. I wasn't sure what the rights were. I wasn't even sure what my own rights were. But I was firm on the general question.<sup>8</sup>

"At the risk of some tedium"—how well I recall that phrase! The day was overcast. The afternoon was wearing on. I almost wished I had brought a lunch with me. But I went doggedly ahead.

"The principles of apportionment . . . have always been such as to give one person or group or class something of a settled preference above another." I could grasp this easily enough. The fact annoyed me. Yet I don't believe I identified myself with the class that was being deprived under the prevailing "principles of apportionment." I was standing aside somewhere and looking at the scene, without an atom of personal resentment but with a fuzzy and generalized disapproval—the agrarian attitude, I suppose. After all, I was a college undergraduate. I expected to succeed in the world, though I did not know at what or how.

Veblen spoke of "good will" as a capitalizable asset. I understood that. I think it was another one of the subjects he had referred to during those Cedro evenings. I have always liked the expression. It seems so kindly. He went on to observe that "smooth-spoken and obsequious salesmen and solicitors, gifted with a tactful effrontery, have come to be preferred to others, who, without these merits, may be possessed of all the diligence, dexterity and muscular force required in their trade." I liked this, too. It was balm to me after my failure to sell Underwood and Underwood stereoscopes and stereographs. It made a virtue of William's inability to improve the citizens of Grass Valley with *Success Magazine* and its book of etiquette. We had been diligent, dextrous and muscular. Why lament the absence of tactful effrontery, which neither of us would ever, to his dying day, possess? Nor, thank God, obsequiousness, either.

Veblen mentioned "the ease and simplicity of the maneuvers

<sup>8</sup>I don't see any reason to back down on it, even now. I believe we fought Germany in 1917-18 and again in the war that is going on as I write because the masters of that country did turn military establishments "to the injury of mankind." We had to use naval and military establishments to abate that injury, but we used them in the hope that we might eventually render them unnecessary.

that lead to large pecuniary results in the higher business finance," and doubted the existence of "pre-eminent sagacity and initiative among the pecuniary magnates." This thought helped to put me more at my ease later on when, a shy and stumbling cub reporter, I occasionally came into the presence of pecuniary magnates. They didn't scare me as much as they might have done. They don't, even now—such is the force of an early habit.

But I did come on something that knocked me for a loop. I shall quote the paragraph:

Typical of a class of investments which derive profits from capital goods devoted to uses that are altogether dubious, with a large presumption of net detriment, are such establishments as race-tracks, saloons, gambling-houses, and houses of prostitution. Some spokesmen of the "non-Christian tribes" might wish to include churches under the same category, but the consensus of opinion in modern communities inclines to look on churches as serviceable, on the whole; and it may be as well not to attempt to assign them a specific place in the scheme of serviceable and disserviceable use of invested wealth.

I have just typed the words for the first time in thirty-five years.<sup>9</sup> They do take me back. My fingers fall into the old pattern, and to some extent my thoughts. I knew enough about Veblen, even then, to know what he meant to convey in this seemingly cautious passage. I knew it so well that my memory, before I refreshed it from the printed text, told me that Veblen had actually listed saloons, houses of prostitution and churches under the same heading. It is possible that he did so, and later, with a certain kind of smile on his face, diluted the association.

A church, to me, was a white-steepled building on a hill, severe in its beauty. It was a place where one's immediate family,<sup>10</sup> one's

<sup>9</sup> I have typed them on a portable typewriter, which cost much less than the one I used in 1907. On the other hand, I don't believe it is as durable or does as good work as the machine of 1907. Changes in the "state of the industrial arts" are not always for the better.

<sup>10</sup> V. P. did not attend church regularly. But he was no village atheist, as I have already indicated. If there was a God V. P. thought He might be in a blackberry patch as well as in a church. He did go to church on special occasions, such as Christmas Eve, Memorial Sunday and Children's Day. When we Duffus children—William, our younger sister, Marjorie, or myself—gave a recitation and did well Pa was as proud as any deacon.

collateral relatives, one's neighbors, farmers from the East Hill and the West, sat soberly, pew by pew, on Sunday mornings; it was a place where Sunday school was held, and maybe the little girl behind you, whom you secretly worshiped, tickled the back of your neck with her muff; it was a place for oyster suppers and sugar sociables; it had a bell, that sounded sweetly down a village street; it had a bell, indeed, and for a period, in one of my home towns in Vermont, I had had the privilege of ringing such a bell, hauling on the rope with all my powers, standing the bell almost upright, but not quite, because it would then fall over with an unpleasant and unrhythmic clanging, then letting it come down and swing over to the other side; this gave me a sense of power, though the phrase was not in use at the time. I rang the bell and people came to church. What more could you do with trumpets?

I was far from orthodox. I didn't want to have to take anything on anybody's say-so. But how could there be a village without a church? How could you knock those steeples down and have much of a village left?

I thought and I thought. Veblen, I knew, was a wise man. What if he were right? But he couldn't be right, for me. I could do without creeds. I wasn't letting anybody, alive or dead, dictate to me what I must believe. But I had to have steeples and bells. The steeples had to be visible a long distance. The bells had to ring along shaded streets and across dreamy meadows.<sup>11</sup>

I went on typing. I still wished to please and astonish the Professor by the speed of my typing, and by its perfection.

President David Starr Jordan came lumbering through the office, which was next to his own, and rested a hand on my shoulder. Was I free? He had some letters. I explained that I was a squatter, not one of the regular office typists. He nodded benevolently and went away. I was thrilled, because this was the first time I had ever talked directly to Stanford's notable scientist and humanist. He seemed to me a great man, and with such faults as I now know he had, he still does seem so. I thought some more.

<sup>11</sup> I was right. Some New England towns have died. The church died, and the bells were silent, first. You have got to have a church or something like it, dedicated to Something or some God, or you haven't a town.

Dr. Jordan was a liberal who could by voice and presence warm any young heart, though the big, well-meaning man sometimes offended the dogmatically faithful. I had heard him speak at a student gathering, out of doors in front of Roble Hall, on the first warm, gentle, beautiful Sunday of my time at Stanford. He had been much in Japan, was fond of his Japanese friends and had made it possible for a number of polite young Japanese to come to his university. On this occasion he talked of Shintoism, which he interpreted as nature worship.<sup>12</sup> He said that if he had not been brought up in another faith he would have liked to be a Shintoist. I didn't mind that at all. It was easy to go along with Dr. Jordan. He had no sharp edges. He wrote and spoke the clearest, simplest English imaginable, and he was trying to bring people together, not to separate them. He believed in being reasonable. He thought that if things were properly explained there would be no enmities between nations, no race hatreds, no intolerances. But Veblen was different. He brought one up with a start.

Veblen hurt. He stung. I can see now that this indicates a good quality in a teacher. He wound one up like a clock—if I may proceed to a new figure of speech. He set one going and one couldn't stop. One ticked and ticked.

So, there in front of the typewriter in the university office, I was being educated. Not to become a Veblen disciple. Not ever to accept Veblen as ultimate gospel. But never to stop questioning myself and all things and all men. Never again to take even a bell or a steeple for granted. Always afterwards to have to defend myself against myself, my emotions against my intellect.

This is education. And education does hurt and sting. If I were a teacher I should sometimes ask my students, have these ideas and this information you have been getting been painful? If the answer was no I shouldn't pass them.

I came unwittingly into this ordeal. I find by consulting my college report cards that I did not take elementary economics

<sup>12</sup> It seems to have been that, in the beginning. The cult of the Emperor-God bears all the earmarks of having been introduced later by politicians. I wouldn't blame Shintoism for the attack on Pearl Harbor, any more than I would ascribe some of the actions of Louis XIV or General Franco to the influence of the Sermon on the Mount.

until the following year. Yet here I was wallowing in the nature of capital, marginal utility, differential competitive advantages, the state of the industrial arts, and the like. The words went by, but some of the concepts stuck. I suppose there has been a trifle of the Norwegian agrarian in me ever since.<sup>13</sup>

I don't know how well I did this copying, for Veblen never told me. He said he hoped that when I came on an abbreviation like "19c" I would know that he was referring to the nineteenth century. He said that when I came to the notes, of which there were plenty, I didn't have to put them in at the bottom of the page,<sup>14</sup> but could stick them in wherever they happened, with lines to set them off. As it happened, I couldn't. I was then, as I am now, under a compulsion to put the notes at the foot of the page, and if there wasn't room for them I tore up the sheet and started over. Veblen's notes, of course, sometimes ran to great lengths, and were very impressive.<sup>15</sup> He had a clear sense of where he was going with his argument, and an equally clear notion of various bypaths. The bypaths went into the notes.

For instance, in discussing the origins of capital, he would dive down into a note to mention Marx's theory of "primitive accumulation." Then he would allude, in the note, to Sombart's criticism of this idea. Then he would mention Ehrenberg's criticism of Sombart. Or he would use the phrase "more or less" and solemnly explain it in a note. Or he would go to town in treating of the theory that persons "should properly be included in the capital summation," with a footnote touching on what should be done with those who are "leading disserviceable or futile lives," yet who possessed "the hedonistically sacred stamp of the human breed." I think he had a lot of fun with this sort of thing, but he was in earnest, too. He wasn't going to be misunderstood if he could help it.

<sup>13</sup> When I took Professor Millis's course in labor problems he thought I wasn't doing any work in the course. So he read my first examination paper before he turned to those of other members of the class. Then he engaged me to correct the other papers. I still feel good about that, for he was (and is) a just man, showing no favors to his friends.

<sup>14</sup> Like this.

<sup>15</sup> I have been fond of notes ever since. This is why there are so many of them in this book.

I believe these illustrations are ample to suggest the kind of material with which I had to deal. I typewrote with great concentration, as well as occasional anguish. At the end of the day I bundled up the manuscript and rode my bicycle back to Cedro. It was good to get back to the cows, the hens, the horses, the cats, the brotherly jibes of William, the friendly scorn of Harry George. It was good to do the milking and to wash the dishes, for neither of these operations was mentally disturbing. It was good to smell the natural smells of night, and to hear the wind in the cedars. It was good to stand outdoors and look at the stars, which, in spite of Veblen, were still in their courses. It was good to be under the partial anesthetic of immaturity, the laughing gas of youth, and not know all that was happening to myself.

As for Veblen, he never made the least effort to discover how much I retained of what I had copied. He let nature take its course.

He did ask me what kind of typewriter I had been using. I wasn't sure, but I mentioned a kind. Then he asked me some question about the machine, possibly how the ribbon reverse gear worked. I didn't know. All I knew was that it did work.

He smiled tolerantly. "If I were using that typewriter," he said, "I couldn't help knowing how it worked. I couldn't operate it unless I knew."

I felt ashamed and stupid. I could understand machines when I was interested in them. I could understand, let us say, the action of the eccentric gear or the injector in a steam locomotive,<sup>16</sup> and this because I loved steam locomotives.<sup>16</sup> Typewriters did not interest me in the same way. They were a kind of magic from which I drew results in the form of legible words. But Veblen could not endure magic. He required evident causes producing evident effects.

I saw that he would have thought more highly of me if I had come home with fewer pages of copy and an exact description of the manner in which pressure on the key brought about an imprint on the paper. But it was too late.

<sup>16</sup> As most boys today love airplanes. I still love steam locomotives—not the electric ones. I would love to drive one, preferably on the Santa Fe over the Raton Pass, though the Southern Pacific run between San Francisco and Santa Barbara would do. On the other hand, I have never been able to love an automobile.

# *IO*

Harry George took up my education where Veblen left off. Of course he worked on William, too, but William was older than I, and more experienced, and there were some things he knew that Harry didn't.<sup>1</sup> I didn't know anything much, except, as I have been trying to explain, what I had caught of the Veblen articles.

Harry wanted to make me a philosophical as well as an economic materialist. I supposed, for example, that I had a soul. Harry didn't think so. Harry said that human beings came into this world perfectly blank. Heredity might determine what kind of impression the world would make on them, but it couldn't do a thing except through the five senses. Suppose, I said, a baby was born that couldn't see, or hear, or taste, or smell, or feel, it would still be a baby, wouldn't it? As it grew up it would have a personality.

Harry said it certainly wouldn't. He said it wouldn't even be conscious. It wouldn't even have an unpleasant personality, such as all the babies he had ever seen had had. It wouldn't have any. It would be an aggregate of protoplasm. It wouldn't even be as bright as protoplasm, because protoplasm knew enough to get food, and this creature wouldn't.

I was at a disadvantage because Harry was then taking a course in psychology, and used to come home with fresh illustrations. If you took a pair of calipers, he said, and spread the points

<sup>1</sup> William was taking Economics I under a subsequently eminent economist, Associate Professor Allyn A. Young, assisted in the quiz section by Ira B. Cross, later Professor of Economics at the University of California. These men gave him a good grounding in his subject. He could give Harry George as good as he sent, in that field.

slightly, they would still be felt as two points when applied to the skin of the fingertips. On the other hand, if you applied them to the skin of certain areas of the back you could have them an inch apart and they would still be felt as one point. He had seen this experiment demonstrated, and it worked just as he said.

"That doesn't prove I haven't got a soul," I protested.

"It helps to prove you are a machine," said Harry patiently. "And not a very good machine, either. Don't rely on me. Ask the Professor. You remember what he said about the human eye, don't you?"

I was not emotionally convinced, but I ran out of arguments.

Then Harry pulled another stop. So I thought we had been having an argument, did I? How did I know we had? How did I know that the words I had been uttering had sounded in his ears as they did in mine, or had the same meaning to him that they had to me?<sup>2</sup>

"Well," I argued, "when it's time for dinner you understand, don't you?"

Harry shook his head. "You think I do. But dinner may be an entirely different thing to me from what it is for you. Maybe you live in order to eat. Yes, I think you do. On the other hand, I eat in order to live. Dinner isn't the same thing for both of us."

"It's the same dinner," I insisted. "When that sonnabitch wasn't cooked it wasn't cooked."

"But we have different ideas of what being cooked amounts to," said Harry, calmly.

"Looks like it. Something went wrong somewhere. Maybe it was inside your head." I smiled and waited.

Harry took another tack. "Look at that poison oak by the fence."

I looked at it. We had been trying to kill it by a simple and obvious method, but it was still thriving.

"What color do you call it?" Harry asked.

"Green." I knew he had me, whatever I said.

<sup>2</sup> Of course he was anticipating modern theories of semantics, but he didn't have a two-dollar word for his ideas. How he would have loved semantics!

"What do you mean by green?"

"Why—green. You know, green. A color."

Harry chortled. "How do you know it looks to me the way it does to you?"

"I suppose you'd say it was red," I retorted bitterly.

"I didn't say anything of the sort," returned Harry. "I would use the word green to describe it. What I am getting at is that my green is not the same as your green. At least, we don't know that it is. We haven't any way of telling. It may be that we can't communicate at all. It may be that we don't speak the same language."

It did seem to me that we had been communicating to the extent of having an argument, but I couldn't prove it. So there I was—no soul and no words. I felt lonesome and naked.

Harry George looked pleased. But he didn't act as though we couldn't communicate. He went on trying to educate me. He made me go down to the university library and read the famous chapter on habit in William James's *Psychology*. I did, and was impressed and scared. I decided that most of my habits were bad, and that I wasn't using my will power enough. Perhaps it was at this time, instead of earlier, that I began sleeping without a pillow.

Harry had been at Stanford, before the earthquake, when James had taught there for a semester. I believe Harry had been working in the university postoffice at the time. At any rate, he saw James come up to the general delivery window to get his mail. He was a modest, unassuming man, and philosopher enough to know that getting one's rights in small matters was often more trouble than it was worth.

"He just stood there," said Harry wrathfully, "and let a couple of bloody sophomores—they looked as if they belonged to one of those so-and-so and such-and-such and this-and-that fraternities (he sailed off into one of his flights of outdoor profanity)—push in ahead of him. I'd have liked to take a crack at them."

He could have done so, frail though he looked. He had done a little boxing, I suppose in an early effort to build himself up and get away from the threatening tuberculosis. His big moment had been when a broken-down third-rate pug, but still a profes-

sional, had dropped into the gym, and Harry had stayed a few rounds with him.

"He wasn't trying to knock me out," Harry modestly explained. "But I stayed. I could have been good."

He glanced at my gangling six feet or so of loose-jointedness and at William's heavier-set but not exactly bulky figure. "If either of you ever gets into a fight," he said, "your only hope is to hit the other fellow first. You might catch him off balance."<sup>3</sup>

He went through the motions, getting an imaginary opponent's guard down with a left to the body, knocking him through the kitchen door with a right to the jaw. It looked easy. I waltzed up and down, never suiting Harry with my technique, but I could knock anybody down so long as he remained imaginary. I wonder why Harry didn't set William and me to boxing each other. He never did. Maybe I hung back. I hadn't been so keen for real boxing since Bud Colby, back in my early high school days, poked me playfully in what I afterwards learned was the solar plexus. I concluded that boxing was painful. Why indulge in unnecessary pain?

William and I weren't the pugnacious type, anyhow. I never saw William in a serious fight but once. It was when we were both in grammar school. One of the big boys had picked on Mayo Lynde. Or maybe Mayo had picked on him. The rest of us waited to see what would happen. The big boy got Mayo down and began kicking him. For a moment we all watched, horrified. Then William went into action like a whirlwind. He didn't knock the big boy cold, as I remember. But he stopped the kicking, all right.<sup>4</sup>

The influence of Cedro would have quieted even a violent person, and we hadn't any such. I am sure Veblen had his moments of irritation. Never what you could call a noisy man, he just grew quieter. If he had ever had to kill some one I think he would have done it almost diffidently. I have often thought of

<sup>3</sup>In my only earnest adult encounter it was the other fellow who hit first.

<sup>4</sup>I am not permitting William to edit this out. Incidentally, I once had a fight with Roscoe Lynde, Mayo's brother, a boy of about my own size, but much richer. Well, both of us couldn't win.

one remark he made. He said that a man had come near hitting him with a rifle bullet, accidentally, of course. He had been surprised to find himself, not scared but furiously angry. He had had an impulse to kill that man, he said. But it wasn't easy to imagine Veblen giving way to the desire to kill, or to any other irresistible emotion. In the incident of which he spoke I am ready to believe that he started analyzing the reasons for his anger before he permitted himself to act upon them. Of course you can't stay angry and analytical at the same time, and I believe the analytical Veblen would always prevail over the angry Veblen. The same thing might be said of Veblen's other emotions, including one on which I shall touch presently, the love of women: I don't know, I suspect so.

As to the three of us, we got along pretty well. As every camper knows, in any group of three young men two will tend to make the third the butt of most of their jokes. If they are civilized and, on the whole, considerate, if they aren't isolated too long, and if conditions are not too desperate, this will not lead to murder. At Cedro I was an obvious butt, for I was the most callow and the least logical. I hardly resented this. Maybe I enjoyed the attention.

I lost my temper on occasion. One night Harry George and I were doing dishes. William was standing by the stove. He said something which annoyed me. I don't remember what he said and he doesn't recall the incident at all. I carefully finished drying a saucer and let it fly in his general direction. It missed him safely and hit the wall. It was a heavy saucer and didn't even break.

Nobody said much. I went over and picked up the saucer, Harry washed it again, and I dried it and put it back on the shelf where it belonged. William didn't appear to feel any worse. I felt better. Our amicable relations were not really disturbed. They were never long disturbed, among the three of us, by anything that was said or done.

For instance, I finally had a little quarrel with Harry George. It was an exchange of rough words, about what I don't know. I picked up my cot and my blankets and migrated from the tent

back to the cabin. Next morning we were as friendly as ever. But Harry didn't ask me to come back and I wouldn't ask to go back. So I stayed in the cabin, but otherwise life went on as before. The thought of this incident was long an ache in my heart after Harry went to Arizona for the last time. It left him alone when he ought not to have been left alone. But this feeling was probably not in his mind at all. We were not treating him as one who might be about to die. We dealt with him as though he, and all of us, were going to live forever. And this attitude may paradoxically have reassured and encouraged him.

I knew later that he could not have shared youth's fine confidence in its own physical immortality—its incapacity to believe that the body which is so strong and valiant can ever weaken and sicken and have to be laid down. That next spring I overheard him say, at the Millis home, that he had "tapped the claret last night." He didn't mean me to hear. I didn't grasp, even then, the meaning of the words. But he was going to die in a hemorrhage, and he knew it. It might come any day, any night.

His courage was exactly that of the young flyers who will not talk of death and keep their dread of it to themselves. And William and I were like the ground crew, facing no such risks, but not talking of death, either—except as something in the abstract and far off, that happened to other people.

Harry George would come stumping down the path toward the cottage in the morning, bareheaded; his yellow hair gleaming in the sun, smiling his crooked, resolute smile, ready with his friendly jeer or genial obscenity. It was his pleasure to pretend that he was suffering from a well-known female complaint, associated with what is called the change of life, and he kept us up to date on the symptoms.

So our lives went on. We fell into a routine, and it was a pleasant one. The winter had a few unusual features. There was a slight earthquake shock, the date of which I don't remember. I was coming home from the campus. At the footbridge I got off my bicycle, and just as I rolled the front wheel on the bridge the structure started to vibrate. I thought, the Professor has ridden his horse over this thing once too often. But it didn't go down.

It merely swung to and fro gracefully. When I reached the cottage I started to tell Harry George about my experience. As I spoke the low privet or privet-like hedge which bordered the walk between the cabin and the cottage went into a strange, stiff, quivering dance.

This wasn't what we used to call an earthquake in California. Nobody made much of it. Nothing fell down. It was queer, that was all. It was like an omen. Its agitation underlined the prevailing peace, and foreshadowed the end of peace.

There was another omen. One day it thundered. I think it thundered on my left, though I hadn't heard of that ancient superstition at that time. In California, in the lowlands and coastal foothills, there are rarely thunderstorms. Generally you have to go to the Sierras for them. It had no real right to thunder, but it did. Again it was like a threat, far off. This idyllic interlude, this balance of wisdom and folly, this stage of youth, this leisure that ought to have been hard work, this struggle that was momentarily so easy—all this could not last.

Another unusual aspect of that winter should be mentioned. Since winter is the rainy season in California it rained. Yet I am sure I do not deceive myself when I say that that winter it rained chiefly at night. There must have been some overcast days and some downright wretched ones. A California rainy season can be dreary. It can rain for two or three weeks straight, with hardly a let-up, until pleasant, well-meaning people go about with murder in their hearts.

Rain fell upon the tent and on the cabin roof all night long sometimes, soothingly, good to sleep to, but in the morning the sun shone. I could not feel that any amends were being made for V. P.'s death, or for anything else. No amends had been made to him. I knew that this thing that was nature had claws, sheathed now but ready to strike. But, knowing it, I could not believe it.

I think I am finding the proper words for my state of mind at the time, however unable I would have been to find them then. I descend into this not too deep abyss because everything in it is so foreign to anything Veblen would have accepted. He would have called it primitive animism, to say the least. He had not

cured me, nor could Harry George, of my tendency to personify, in a wholly unscientific way, the unseen forces of the earth.

I do not wish to make this tendency more subtle than it was, or to set up shop as a lost mystic. I had no wish to explore the supernatural. I merely wanted to extract significance from little and common things: to read contentment into barnyard noises; to give personalities to animals and fowls; to discover intention in the parade of sunlit days, in the shift of grass colorings from browns, yellows and reds to ecstatic green as the rains took hold, in wind, in little sounds at night.

Veblen's very presence should have killed this mood. It did not. In the unconscious insolence of my youngness, my inexperience, my striving for more than any life lived on a rigidly logical plane can yield, I took what I needed from him and let the rest go. He assumed no father's role for me, nor, I am sure, for William or Harry. I could put a man temporarily in that place, and did later with Fremont Older, my first newspaper editor. But not Veblen. He himself did not wish the emotional nexus any more than he did the cash nexus. He would win disciples for his ideas, never for his whole hidden and involved personality.

Why did not Harry George rid me of my adolescent moonshine? Certainly, as I have tried to show, he worked at it. No rigidly mathematical astronomer could have had a more dismal view than he of the cold impersonality, the complete indifference of the universe to man's hopes. His favorite poem was James Thompson's *City of Dreadful Night*, many passages of which he knew by heart:

As I came through the desert thus it was,  
As I came through the desert: All was black,  
In heaven no single star, on earth no track;  
A brooding hush without a stir or note,  
The air so thick it clotted in my throat;  
And thus for hours; then some enormous things  
Swooped past with savage cries and clanking wings:  
  
But I strode on austere;  
No hope could have no fear.

He would repeat such lines as these, and I think these very lines, as I sat in his tent at night—and I continued to sit there long and often after I had stopped sleeping there. They symbolized for him some horror that he had found in life, and at the same time they comforted him. For me they had no comfort. While I still slept in the tent I would sometimes lie awake thinking of them. Then I would hear, as we often did in those days, the howling of coyotes that came down from the hills, on some scavenging errand, or driven by moonlight. There was another barking. The Professor said the town dogs sometimes came out and fought with the coyotes.

I do not know why there should have been any consolation in this wild music, and yet there was. I can hear it now, by listening long enough. It runs together in my head with the sound of the ocean breaking under the walls of the old marine biological laboratory at Pacific Grove when, some years later, I was janitor and slept there; and with winter storms, howling around a house I knew in my Vermont boyhood, and likewise, at times, around a certain house in Connecticut.

It was beautiful in its way, so wild, so full of eager life. It was beautiful that it should sound dangerous and send a slight chill up one's spine, and yet not be dangerous. Perhaps it was danger long past and remembered, but now with its fangs drawn. Perhaps there was even something in human nature, the faint stirrings of memories of hunters long dead, that ran with the coyotes over the hills.

I don't know. I know only that it is a strong memory, just as is the memory of Harry George, sitting on his cot, the lamplight on his yellow hair, looking off into space and with a kind of exultant mournfulness saying the lines of Thompson's poem.

"As I came through the desert thus it was"—but not for me.

And so I put it down, not understanding but remembering.

I put it down, remembering Harry George as himself, and also as more than himself; remembering him, as I have to do now, in association with all the doomed young men of the next decade, and of the decade in which these words are being written.

As he came through the desert, so did they, and he was not less valiant. As they came through the desert thus it was.

It could not be all darkness with him any more than it was with them. Life had a flavor for him, for all of his philosophical pessimism, and for all of his despair. In spite of everything he was young.

He was fond of *The Road to Mandalay*, whose words were new to me in 1907-8, and used to repeat it when he was in a restless mood. For all his enforced traveling he still had the wandering spirit.<sup>5</sup> "That's the way a lot of fellows feel," he said. "There's never been a poem that expressed it better." Like many footloose men I have known, he could romanticize and dramatize a mode of life which was inherently sad. He was of the type who know many cities and many countrysides, and find no lasting home in any till they die; and he knew it, and knew that there was a mournful poetry in it, the poetry of the sailor who knows it's time for him to go, and of the cowboy who doesn't want to be buried on the lone prairie.

Being mournful was a sort of pleasure, and being just plain foolish was another. I could join in that; I was of just the right age and disposition. A drum corps performed at the university one day. I heard it, and the limitless possibilities of drumming enchanted me. We had, of course, no drum, but we did have dish-pans. I seem to remember taking a dish-pan outside the kitchen door, where there was more room for the noise, and practicing with a pair of table knives, held by the blades, and also, in my gentler moments, with sticks of kindling. Harry stood this as long as he could, and then came out and showed me how. He could do the long roll and punctuate it with thumps. William joined in, too, and proved quite agile. We kept at this for some days, not continuously, for our studies, work around the place and our eating and sleeping broke in on us,<sup>6</sup> but pretty often.

<sup>5</sup> When William went to California an ancient lady in Vermont shook her head dubiously. "I hope," she told Ma, "he ain't goin' to be a wanderin' feller."

<sup>6</sup> One of William's favorite maxims was, "If pleasure interferes with business give up business." But neither then nor later did he live up to his noble principle. I suppose he was born without the strength of will which a man needs to let his work go to hell. He says he gave up canvassing, didn't he? He did, but he got another job.

The hens and cats, accustomed to come to the whistle, began to come to the drumming. I have a happy memory of myself drumming (no doubt our memories always pick out scenes in which we show to advantage), William and Harry standing by as critical but nevertheless attentive listeners, and the space around the kitchen door an animated carpet of hens and cats.<sup>7</sup>

And what was the Professor doing all this time? I suppose he was in his study for at least a portion of it. I do not recall ever seeing him in his study, but I can imagine him there about as well as though I had seen him. Better, maybe, for I can examine him more closely without being embarrassed. I think he sat there reading, making notes, and finally composing his articles, papers and reviews in a careful, methodical way, pausing for a phrase, smiling to himself when he found exactly what he wanted. I think he had a great power of concentration. He must have had.

His door would be shut, but his windows would be open on the garden, or what had been the garden. Smells would come in, and sounds. He would notice at once if anything strange were happening, but he might not have considered our drumming strange. He once said of a certain lady who had threatened to commit suicide, "Well, it seems to me she is functioning normally."<sup>8</sup> He might have thought we were. He would have come out at once, of course, if a baby panda, a penguin, an auk or a rear-admiral in full uniform, or all of them, had appeared under his window; he was scientifically minded, and would have wished to know why. But it took a lot from us to stir him.

So I don't believe he asked us to stop drumming. It seems to me that the impression got around that he did want us to stop. Veblen got some things accomplished by a process so delicate that thought transference is almost the only phrase to describe it. He could and did transfer thought by a slight movement of the eyebrows or an almost but not quite imperceptible modulation of the voice. Though we knew he had no spite or violence in him he could scare the hell out of us.

<sup>7</sup>I can't get William to accept the cats as innumerable. He admits there were several, but his memory does not retain them as the sands of the sea. The only explanation I have is that I was more cat-conscious than he was.

<sup>8</sup>She was. She did not commit suicide.

## *II*

I know now that Veblen was pursued during his mature life by what is vulgarly called woman trouble. I don't know whether this was the reason or the excuse for the treatment accorded him at several of the institutions where he taught. I suspect that if he had been perfectly regular in his economic and social views much might have been forgiven him, as it has been forgiven many men who were correct in those matters but incorrect in their love lives. But I am writing of what I knew then, not of what I know now.

It was not possible for me at that time to imagine Veblen suffering from the pangs of what I took to be love. I had been in love most of the time since I was twelve years old, and thought I knew a good deal about the ailment. By preference or destiny—who is to say which is which in such cases?—I had been addicted to the unrequited variety of love, with much worshiping from afar and very little wrestling in old-fashioned hammocks. I was therefore an idealist about women and about love.<sup>1</sup> For me love was something to write poetry about. This situation had definite advantages, but it did not enable me to see Veblen's love life in the round.

Even now I cannot imagine Veblen composing sonnets on a lady's ears, or strumming a guitar beneath a window, or even lying awake at night because some lady, or several ladies, had refused him. I still think he went right on with his work, love or no love, ate about as usual, slept about as usual. It is easier to believe him capable of affection than of passion. I think he did regard his first wife, Ellen Veblen, with affection, and that during his marriage to her he was kind to her, except in the one essential

<sup>1</sup> Shucks, I still am.

of being faithful. That he could inspire an abiding devotion in a woman, in spite of everything, I know from what Ellen Veblen told me many years later. I shall come to that.

It is easy to believe that many women were attracted to Veblen. One lady, whose opinion I respect and who did not like him at all, said to me once that Veblen was a case of a man who did not discover until well on in life that he *was* attractive to women. Her belief was that he then made up for lost time. Such a thing is certainly not unprecedented. I do suspect, and what I saw at Cedro Cottage confirms me, that he was as often pursued as pursuing.

I do not wish to arouse unjustifiable expectations. I saw very little.

What none of the three of us saw is worth recording. Veblen, as we knew, had a shack in the hills, among the redwoods, on the road to Pescadero and the coast. Since I saw it in the fall of 1908 I know what it looked like. It was erected on stumps on an elevation of the main ridge, and it commanded a view of the Pacific Ocean. Inside, it was plain but, to my outdoor eyes, pleasant and comfortable. He kept cooking utensils there, and some food. The dirt road that ran near by was not much traveled. Sometimes he would saddle Beauty, or hitch her to the cart, and jog off. I suppose that was where he went. I do not know that he ever took women there, and since I am writing of what I know at first hand and not of what has been said or written by others, this is as far as I can go.

One can imagine all he likes. The shack would have been a beautiful spot for two persons, man and woman, who loved each other and wished to be alone. It would have been a beautiful spot in which to raise Cain. If the Professor had desired merely to commune with nature he could have done so at Cedro. He could have arranged to be alone at Cedro, instead of surrounding himself, as he did, with a menagerie of hens, cats, cows, horses and students. I do not believe that he went up to the hills to worship God, for his universe contained no God. I do not believe he went up to see the chipmunks or deer, though there were some there,

or to study birds. But I did not speculate on the subject then, and there is not much use in speculating on it now.

The shack had once stood on the Cedro grounds and was to stand there again. Mr. Dorfman thinks the Professor hired it from Mr. Lathrop and chuckled at the thought that he had driven a shrewd bargain. My own recollection is that he told us he borrowed it without taking Mr. Lathrop into his confidence, and that he chuckled over that. One way or another he did a good deal of chuckling over Mr. Lathrop.

There was the shack, at any rate, and the fogs came over from the sea and covered it deep and wet, and rolled away from it again, and let its occupants or occupant view the glory of nature, if not the glory of God.

Veblen sometimes went away on the train. He had a friend and generous defender in Professor Wesley C. Mitchell, then at the University of California, at Berkeley, across the Bay from San Francisco, and went to see him occasionally.<sup>2</sup> It is conceivable that Veblen saw other persons than Mitchell on his trips to San Francisco or Berkeley, and that some of these persons were women. I don't know. He always came back the same quiet, imperturbable man he had been when he went away. He did not show any of the symptoms that I recognized then, or would recognize now, as those of a man in love.

I now come to the only pertinent incident I can describe from actual observation.

Veblen did bring a young woman to Cedro. Or she came, whichever way one wishes to look at it. He took the two-wheeled cart and went down to the station at Palo Alto to meet her. I do not recall that he betrayed any agitation when he went down. He certainly betrayed none when he brought her in to dinner.

If there was agitation it was Harry, William and myself who felt it. First, there was doubt as to our ability to concoct a meal that would please the young lady, who might be more critical

<sup>2</sup> William says that Professor Mitchell came to Cedro to see Veblen when we were there, at least once, possibly more than once. William remembers Mitchell as a dark-haired young man with a mustache who came out into the kitchen and talked with Veblen as the Professor made the coffee for dinner. Then and later Mitchell did a good deal for Veblen, which took courage after Veblen fell into disfavor.

about her food than the Professor was about his. Second, there was doubt as to how much in the situation we were supposed to take for granted. There was not much that we could say or do, of course, in any case. But how were we expected to feel?

Any other man but the Professor would have asked us if we minded having a cosy little dinner all by ourselves in the kitchen. This escape didn't occur to the Professor. Or if he considered it he abandoned it.

So we all sat down as usual, plus the young lady. She was not as young as I was, nor as William was, perhaps not as young as Harry George was. I felt, without analyzing her, that she had seen something of life. We had hoped that she would be astoundingly beautiful. At least, I had. If Veblen were to go wrong with a woman I wanted her that way. I was at that time inclined toward brunettes. I wanted their hair as black as could be. I wanted them with black sloe eyes, clear skins with high color, and something exotic in their manner—a touch of gypsy, a trifle of Spanish, or a dash of Celt.<sup>3</sup>

Veblen's young lady wasn't such. She wasn't exactly a blonde, for her hair was brown. She wasn't exactly a brunette. She had gray or blue eyes. Her features, unlike Mona Lisa's, had no strangeness in the proportions. Looking back, I am afraid that what troubled me about her was that she was rather wholesome. She looked like a young lady a man might marry because he had grown fond of her. She didn't look like a young lady a man would jump off a bridge for, even a low bridge, or give up a comfortable professorship at Stanford for. She even looked as though she might really be Veblen's niece, which was what she had told William she was—though I didn't know of it at that moment.

She had a sense of humor. I could tell this, even then, by the look in her eye as she sized us up. I was sure she was aware of our constraint, and of Veblen's constraint, indeed, of every one's constraint but her own.

If anyone has read this far with close attention<sup>4</sup> he will un-

<sup>3</sup> I still believe there is a place in the world for the kind of woman thus described.

<sup>4</sup> Including the notes. You can't really understand a scholarly book unless you pay attention to the notes. They are there for your guidance.

derstand that she might be amused by us. William was composed, solemn, anxious to say the right thing and avoid saying the wrong thing. He had had quite a career as a lady-killer in high school,<sup>5</sup> and though he felt the weight of this situation at Cedro he wasn't exactly abashed. Harry George, I suspect, was inwardly irritated by the whole affair, worried by his cooking and its possible results, afraid he would make noises while eating, and inclined to feel sorry for the Professor.

Why should Harry feel sorry for the Professor? Because he had convinced himself, I suppose, that Veblen was being pursued. He had, as I have pointed out, a great respect for women, but they had to live up to it. They had to leave men alone, except when men wanted them around. Harry thought—and he may have been right—that Veblen hadn't wanted a woman around at this moment.

The conversation wasn't animated, in spite of all the young lady did to make it so. There were difficulties too great to be overcome. In the first place, she had no apparent reverence for the Professor and his learning. This lack made Harry, William and myself uneasy. It undermined our own position. I think it also annoyed the Professor himself. He was human enough to enjoy our awe of him, and his visitor wasn't doing that awe any good. It is so easy to imitate an even passably pretty woman when she is making fun of something, because one naturally doesn't want to seem stuffy. We couldn't make fun of the Professor. We would have died first. But we might break out around the gills a little,<sup>6</sup> in spite of ourselves, if she did.

In the second place, we weren't sure that she wasn't making fun of us, the three of us underlings, when she showed a sprightly interest in the homespun details of life at Cedro. I believe she wanted to know about the poultry and the animals, how we managed, who did what, and so on. To us there was nothing remarkable in these things. This was our little world,

<sup>5</sup> William says this is news to him. I guess he just forgot. Waterbury, Vt., was full of broken hearts in his day.

<sup>6</sup> I recall my brother using this expression in another connection at about that time. He thought my social life might be more successful if I didn't just glare at my friends, especially my lady friends, when I met them.

and it seemed thoroughly commonplace. How else could it be? We had worked it out in what seemed to us a logical manner. We explained all this to her. But I am afraid our arrangements, and the reasons we gave for them, amused her.

In brief, she was not at all like a young woman with a guilty secret. We weren't sitting in judgment on her. She wasn't exactly sitting in judgment on our sins, either, for we hadn't committed any that we knew of. But she did seem to have the intelligent and indulgent interest that a traveler has in talking to the natives of a preposterous foreign country.

The meal was gotten through with somehow, to the almost audible relief of every one but the visitor. When it was over the Professor didn't seem to be in the mood for further general conversation, if what he had said so far could be called conversation. He got up, politely held open the door that led to his own part of the house, and this was the last we saw of him and the young lady that night.

I don't believe I imagined anything in particular going on in the unchaperoned intimacy behind that door. I don't know why I didn't, for Harry George had given me careful instructions as to the behavior of men and women when left alone in each other's company. He was as positive as a private detective arranging for an uncontested divorce in a state which admits only one ground for breaking up a marriage. He was as positive as the law itself.

But I wasn't. I wasn't sure she wasn't the Professor's niece. Or that she hadn't come to consult him about her studies. She had plenty of opportunity to do so. He had his books handy.

We talked about her with restraint. We had a sense of loyalty to Veblen that forbade us to discuss his private affairs too candidly. Besides, we may all have had a feeling that he was aware, not only of all that was done at Cedro Cottage but of all that was said. Our relationship with him demanded mutual confidence in essentials. His young woman was his own business. Having almost no social life outside of Cedro and consequently no young women of our own, we should have been stirred by this romantic apparition. I cannot say that we were.

I am hazy about breakfast and most of the next day. Maybe the Professor took the young woman driving, and showed her the country. Maybe he didn't. At any rate, she did not stay for dinner the next evening.

What I do remember is that I, and not the Professor, drove her back to Palo Alto to catch the train to, or toward San Francisco. It was after dark. I was embarrassed. Conversation lagged, in spite of her friendly efforts, as we drove down the county road, through the campus and into the palm-lined avenue that led through the arboretum to the railway station.

Finally she asked, "And how do you like Professor Veblen?"

I said I liked him very much. Then I sailed into an additional observation. I was getting loquacious at last. "He's an awfully interesting talker," I said.

"Oh," she replied. "Do you think so?" She was silent for a few moments. I could almost feel her smiling in the dark. "I don't."

With this remark, so far as I know, she passed forever from my life. I put her on the train, the train went away, and I jogged back to Cedro.

The Professor didn't seem any happier after this episode. He didn't seem any less happy. He seemed exactly the same. I never heard him mention the young lady again.

William had the last word. A day or two after the visit he happened to speak of her to Veblen, referring to her as Veblen's niece. The Professor fixed him with a cold and tranquil eye.

"She is not my niece," he said.

And that was that.

About this time I made a dash for freedom. It was not a prolonged dash. I did not mean it to be. Yet, in a sense, it was more of a scandal than anything a mere woman could have produced at Cedro. It was an insolent defiance of the Veblenian folkways and basic assumptions. I went to San Francisco—but first I must explain about San Francisco.

At Cedro we were an agrarian patriarchy, with William, Harry George and myself as the agrarians and Veblen as the patriarch. As such we were suspicious of cities and of the people who lived in them.<sup>1</sup> We shuddered at their corrupt politics. We jeered at their fat policemen, tanking up in saloons while crime ran riot. Personally, I had a horror of so many people in so small a space. I was also afraid of them. I still recall the timidity with which I first ventured upon the streets of Montpelier, Vt. (pop. about 6,000 at that time) and of Burlington, Vt. (pop. about 21,000), making a wretched failure of trying to feel as though I looked as though I had been born and raised there.<sup>2</sup>

Earlier during this year at Cedro I had had to go to San Francisco, or thought I had, to consult an oculist. I didn't then want to go. I suppose this attitude would seem strange to a generation of students who went to college chiefly because it was such fun to get away from the campus every week-end. It would have seemed strange then to Stanford undergraduates who liked to

<sup>1</sup> Since then I have spent most of the working hours and some of the sleeping hours of eight years in San Francisco and twenty-three years in New York City. Still, I don't altogether like big cities.

<sup>2</sup> The characteristic sound of a city then, as I recall it, was the plop of horses' hoofs on cobblestones or asphalt. Country towns had dirt roads or at best macadam, and hoofs don't plop on such roads.

lean an elbow on the bar of the Palace Hotel and admire Maxfield Parrish's big picture; or who would boast, with more or less reason, of running along Pacific Street with two dollars in their fists, and spending the two dollars in manly sin. But so it was. I didn't care for it.

I had a small, local patriotism that attached me to Cedro. I felt disloyal, even though I *had* to go to San Francisco. I went off across the green fields to Menlo, clinging to these homely, lovely scenes as long as I could. I went to Menlo because it was nearer to San Francisco and the train fare was five or ten cents less than that from Palo Alto, but I liked going across the fields, too. I went about the city, when I got there, like a spy in the enemy's country, through the burned area, up Market and along Mission street, where offices and businesses driven uptown by the earthquake and fire of 1906 were still located.

I got where I was going without any trouble. I have always been able to do that in American cities. But if any one had then told me that a few years later I was to be a San Francisco newspaper reporter, familiar with courts, police stations and morgues, boarding incoming ships off North Beach when the regular waterfront reporter was on his vacation, blowing little fires up into big front-page fires on dull days, failing to get the initials and inventing them, even covering third-rate theatrical performances that no one else wished to attend—if I had been shown this dazzling glimpse of the future I would have fallen at the feet of the nearest fat policeman.<sup>8</sup>

The oculist put drops in my eyes in the course of his examination, and the belladonna, if that was what it was, made me see the city vaguely when I came out. I romanticized it a little then. I thought of the ships coming in, of the sea thundering on the rocks beneath the Cliff House, of the whistles blowing and blowing mournfully in the fog, of beautifully dressed ladies and tailored gentlemen dining and sinning in palatial restaurants, with

<sup>8</sup> And in my early days in newspaper work my city editor would have collapsed, too, if he had been told, rightly or wrongly, that I would some day become a reporter.

bottles of wine on the table and all hell to pay.<sup>4</sup> But I gladly took the train again. I regained Cedro, again across the fields from Menlo, with a sigh of relief. Again, to the drowsy clucking of the hens, the quiet stamping of the ponies as they ate their evening hay and barley, the mooing of the cows, I became an agrarian. I slept well that night, drunk with country sounds.

So why did I have to ride my bicycle to San Francisco to see the parade when Admiral Robley D. Evans arrived in March, 1908, with sixteen battleships and twelve thousand officers and men, and ready, as the stout old Admiral said, for a fight or a frolic? <sup>5</sup>

The physical difficulties were considerable, for "The City," as it was then known all over California, was thirty miles away. As a matter of fact, including my getting lost, the trip took me over a seventy-mile course, in addition to which I walked four or five miles and stood around for several hours.

But the physical difficulty was nothing compared with the moral and intellectual obstacles I had to overcome. Harry George couldn't have been more deeply indignant if I had proposed to derail a passenger train or burn down an old ladies' home. He thought that my entire education had been wasted, that my association with him and Veblen had not benefited me in the slightest, and that I was biting the hand that fed me. Why in hell, he asked, did I want to go round the corner, let alone ride a bicycle to San Francisco and back, to look at a lot of uniformed idlers who ought to be doing an honest day's work ashore? Hadn't I been listening to Veblen at all? Had I been eating in my sleep during those evenings when he had explained things to us? Was I in a comatose condition when I copied out those articles of his?

<sup>4</sup>This was not an illusion. They did and there was. There was hardly anything that a country boy could imagine as to what went on in a big, wicked city that did not actually go on in San Francisco. There was one restaurant where you could drive your car, or have your taxi driven, into an elevator, and be whisked incognito to an upper story. You didn't go to all that trouble if you were dining with your aunt.

<sup>5</sup>Evans was a great popular hero in those days. He brought the fleet to San Francisco, though Admiral C. S. Sperry took it on around the world. It was believed by some alarmists at that time that the United States and Japan might come to blows in the Pacific, and that the fleet's voyage was President Roosevelt's broad hint that we could give blow for blow. I refer, of course, to President Theodore Roosevelt.

Didn't I know that armies and navies existed for the sole purpose of trampling on the workingman's neck? That they were economically worse than a plague of grasshoppers? That they were morally inexcusable? That the common peoples of the world didn't want war and would get along together like brothers if the militarists gave them a chance.<sup>6</sup>

I knew all these things, or thought I did. When I was in San Francisco calling on my oculist I had passed an army recruiting station. Later I had dreamed that I had enlisted in the army for three years and couldn't get out; I rather liked (in my dream) the brass buttons, which I believed would attract women, but I felt scared at not being able to get out. Even in my dream I knew that I had no aptitude for soldiering.<sup>7</sup>

Well, I said, this was an historic event. No American fleet had gone around the world before, so far as I knew. Maybe there would be a war. I was a history major. A war would be history. If I could see history in the making I ought to do so. I didn't approve of everything that happened in history, did I? Yet I went on studying it. I didn't approve of all kinds of weather, but I didn't stay in bed just because it had been raining for two weeks (it hadn't, but this was for the sake of the argument), did I?

Harry George said I probably got up to eat. He thought this was the only reason.

I said that my going to San Francisco didn't imply approval of the parade, or of war as an instrument of national policy (I didn't use those words, which were invented later, but that was the idea), and I was just as fond of the common people as Harry was.

Harry said that would please them, when they heard of it.

I said that Harry didn't seem to be able to understand my motives, but I was going, anyhow.

Then William joined Harry in the argument, and they took a new tack. They said they didn't believe me. They said I would

<sup>6</sup> Harry's arguments were good pacifist doctrine in 1908, and later. The pacifists who supported World Wars No. 1 and 2 were not inconsistent. They were fighting militarism where it lived.

<sup>7</sup> I was never a member of any man's army. I did do a little amateur drilling in 1942. In sham battles I was as brave as a lion, but I always took five counts to get to right shoulder arms.

talk a lot about it, but when the time came, which would be early in the morning, I wouldn't do it. They said I was too lazy to do it. They brought the subject up at dinner, hoping that the Professor would turn on me and wither me. The Professor didn't. He smiled wearily, but didn't seem alarmed or depressed. If I wished to go running around, or bicycling around, after false gods, why should he worry? It was no affair of his. He wasn't taking me seriously. None of them did. And in those days I loved to be taken seriously.

After this there was no way out. I didn't have the two dollars, or whatever it cost, to go and come on the train. Moreover, I had said I would go by bicycle, as a final proof of my virile nature, or something. I took the alarm clock to bed with me and set it, I believe, for four o'clock in the morning. I was then sleeping in the cabin. I heard William's measured breathing, but wasn't sure whether he was measuring it consciously or otherwise. I crept out into the chilly darkness, a true and even virulent pacifist at that moment, cursing Robley D. Evans and each of his twelve thousand officers and men for getting me into this fix.

In the kitchen I heated some coffee and ate one or two round slabs of pilot bread—the worthy, old-fashioned hardtack that kept its integrity in spite of dunking and cannot be had any more. I slipped some into my pocket, in case I got hungry before night, for of money, beyond a dime or two, I had none.

I wheeled my bicycle softly down the gravelly drive, for I did not wish to wake the Professor. His windows were dark. Cedro was asleep. How well it slept! I felt like a traitor sneaking out to join the enemy.

At Menlo Park I came into the main road, which in after years was never deserted at any hour of night, for there were to roar the great trucks which fed the City and which the City fed, and there were to speed the young, the reckless, lovers and gangsters, all night long, in the painful footsteps of the Padres, down through San Jose, down through Gilroy, down through San Luis Obispo, down through Santa Barbara, into Los Angeles.

For an hour or so, in March, 1908, I met no one. I passed Redwood City. I passed San Mateo. I passed Burlingame. Gaunt eucalyptus trees lined the highway. There were ghostly oaks in the

fields. There were walls of nineteenth century estates, already a little ancient. The Coast Range was black, and ragged at the top. Then it was black and rounded.

Before dawn I saw the glow of the City ahead. Then I had the feeling that I have often had later, and hope I may have again, of doubt vanishing and certainty coming in its stead, that the difficult thing I had set out to do was indeed going to be done—that I was really going to pull off this little feat and come home triumphant.

To my eyes the City was tremendous. It was wickedly beautiful, more so then, I suppose, than it could be now, for the highways and towns along and through which I passed were not then much lighted. I saw the City, all cities, in this new light. I saw them as adventure and as future. I wish I could see any City that way again.

This was not Harry George's City of Dreadful Night. It sang with the voices of men and women, there in the morning twilight.

I had betrayed Cedro, but for the moment I was glad.

I think I may have stopped to gnaw some pilot bread and to observe the dawn. This last I had not lately done. It was worth while, and I can still recommend it.

Now I was being passed by milk trucks and market trucks, and by some traffic outward bound. I came out of the night into reality, but still I was excited and unrepentant. I trundled down into the Mission District, and saw shops and restaurants beginning to open, people going to early jobs, street-cars running. The City was not at that time traffic-tangled. I came safely into Market Street, down among the tall towers, rode down Third Street into the region known as "South of the Slot," where seamen and miners, fishermen and seasonal workers from all over the Coast used to winter in cheap lodging-houses, and left my bicycle at the Third and Townsend Street station—the only place in San Francisco where, as far as I knew, one could leave a bicycle safely. This cost me ten cents, my only outlay in money that day.

Then I walked back to Market Street, scared by the crowds and by the City's fierce pulse, by poverty and crowding and bleak impersonality, but proud, too. I had done what I set out to do.

I think I took my stand about in front of the old Bulletin office, which was later to be as familiar and homelike to me as Cedro itself.<sup>8</sup>

It was a good parade, the first in which I observed the rolling gait of sailors in a disciplined mass of men stretching for many blocks. There were bands, and crowds, and flags tossing, and Admiral Robley D. Evans himself, looking as weatherbeaten and resolute as all get out. In spite of what Harry George and possibly Veblen would have considered my better self, I was thrilled to the marrow. If the Japanese, or anybody else, had to be beaten in battle, why, these men could do it. You couldn't look at them and have doubts.

I do not invent this memory to suit later events. I had the emotion. I do not think it was a lofty emotion. I do not believe patriotism resides in the viscera, where any good brass band can set it quivering. This was a parade without a cause to justify it. I had rather, now, have the cause without parade. As of that date I was wrong, Harry George and Veblen right. There was still a chance, then, to settle this world's affairs properly without the assistance of Admiral Evans and his twelve thousand officers and men. We missed the chance. Everybody did. It didn't come again. We needed those men, and those who followed them. They served us well. But I wish it could have been otherwise.

More than a third of a century later, reading the newspapers, coming on the names of other admirals, also doing business in the great waters, and a captain or two, I have wondered if I saw any of them that day, young and jaunty, coming along Market Street with the bands playing.

I am glad I saw that parade. It *was* history.

\* Eight years later I saw a different kind of parade from inside the Bulletin building—the Preparedness Day Parade of 1916. I saw the marchers go down toward the Ferry and I saw the ambulances rushing back with victims of the bomb explosion for which poor Tom Mooney was later held responsible—an innocent victim like the others. I saw a man riding one of the ambulances shake a clenched fist at the Bulletin windows as he went by, for the Bulletin had been so anti-war that some suspected it of encouraging the bombing. As though pacifism and murder were somehow related! The tumult of those days, which I felt and saw from the desk next the A. P. telegraph instrument where I composed editorials, was a far cry from the peace of Cedro Cottage.

But I had moments that same day when I wasn't glad. When it was all over I went back to Third and Townsend and got my bicycle. Then I thought I would try a short cut home. I went on and on until I saw a black hill overhanging my route—the one just north of South San Francisco. There didn't seem to be any road around it.

I hailed a motorman just hauling his car out of a barn. Was I headed right, I inquired. He spat scornfully. San Francisco motor-men were a hearty breed, as they had to be to stand up against the United Railroads. I was not headed right, he said.

Could he, I asked—that is, did they—was it—in short, might I put my bicycle on his car and ride back with him?

He spat again, but not unsympathetically. I might not, he said. It was against the rules.

I rode and rode. I rode back to Third and Townsend, to make sure. I rode up Third Street to Market. I rode out Market to Mission. I rode up Mission until I connected with the southbound road—El Camino Real, the Royal Highway, as romanticists love to call it. It was no royal highway. It was not romantic.

It grew dark, as it still does in March, too early. I munched some pilot bread and possibly some dried prunes. These are delicious when you are hungry, and do not have, and cannot get, anything else. The bread is dry, the prunes sweet, and the combination sits in the stomach like a guilty conscience.

I passed the cemeteries, almost wishing I were in one and at rest, possibly with a bicycle carved on my tombstone. Then, I thought, laughing bitterly, Harry George, William and even the Professor would be sorry.

The hills on my right, to seaward, were black and rounded. Then they were black and saw-toothed. The night was cool. It did not rain. Indeed, in March it was getting ready not to rain for a while, though its mind was not quite made up.

The stars came out: the real ones, up aloft, and the more brilliant constellation of the City behind me. I thought of Admiral Evans and his twelve thousand officers and men, and I thought of beautiful women and their polished attendant males, all making merry and some sinning. I felt that fierce and glad pulse. But I

didn't want any of it. I was an agrarian. I was going home. Home to Cedro. Home to that aloof personality, Thorstein B. Veblen, who had been so kind to us and to me, and who would have said he was sorry, and then let the subject drop, if I had never showed up again in this mortal life.

Home to the hens, the cows, the ponies and the cats. Home to the cypress and the eucalyptus. Home to the smell of Cedro, and all its little sounds.

I pushed my bicycle wearily up the graveled drive, then, my pride returning, walked briskly through the kitchen into the dining-room. They were still sitting there, the three of them.

"How was it?" my brother asked.

"All right," I said.

The Professor smiled, a smile full of irony, tolerance, history, condescension, and some sympathy for a boy who must have looked tireder than he was willing to confess.

# I3

And spring came. I wish to say a few words about spring in the Santa Clara Valley at that time. By this I do not mean to suggest that the climate has changed. It is I, for good or ill, who have changed, along with my brother William and all others who were young in 1908. Maybe for the better. Maybe for the worse. Who can say?

It was not the violent spring to which William and I had been accustomed during our Vermont boyhood. The Vermont spring is a hell-raiser. It comes down on you like an invading army. It stands you on your ear. It makes young persons fall in love when they can't afford it, and with the wrong people. It batters you with ecstasy. It sets you to running like a hound after a happiness that does not exist, whose scent grows no warmer with all the running, which is never brought to bay. It breaks your heart into a thousand pieces, though if you are young enough your wounds will heal.

The Santa Clara Valley springs were different. I say they *were*. It was not during this particular spring but during one much like it a year or so later that I sat for half a semester, three times a week, under a professor who was my good and admired friend, listening to lectures on a subject in which I was keenly interested—the theatre of the nineteenth and beginning twentieth centuries.

Only I wasn't listening. I couldn't listen. I couldn't have listened to Abraham Lincoln or to Helen of Troy. I wouldn't have heard a word of what Helen said. I would just have looked at her.

I remember but one fact out of that course, for which I received three credits out of the one hundred and twenty that were required for graduation. It seems there was once a French play-

wright named Scribe. His technique was marvelous. He just didn't happen to have anything to say.

I didn't have anything to say, either, not out loud. I sat in the back row of the amphitheatre, which, unfortunately for my learned and really witty instructor, afforded sight and smell of the oases of the inner Quad, and some other shrubbery, and a bit of sky. I sat and wrote rhymes, half humorous, half sentimental. I didn't do anything with most of them. I just wanted to write them.

Spring was my trouble. Not love. Just spring.

Spring used to slip up on people in the Santa Clara Valley when they weren't looking. It was treacherous, spring was. The grass would turn green after the December rains. That wasn't spring. Things would blossom. I forgot what things, except that the sweet-smelling acacias came along when they were ready, and dripped yellow blossoms to be crushed underfoot. And suddenly the night and day would be filled with fragrance.

That wasn't spring, perhaps.

But suddenly you knew it was spring. There was nothing you had to do about it. You weren't worried because there was so little of it, and so brief, as it was in Vermont. There was plenty more where It came from. You just relaxed. You let go. You didn't give a damn. You wanted it to stay *now*, the present moment, forever. You half believed it would.

I lived in a sort of golden bubble, with Cedro Cottage at the center, and its elastic edges taking in the campus. I could see outside the bubble, but I didn't go outside. And I was oblivious to most of what was going on outside. Harry George and William, I recall, reproached me with my seeming indifference to world events. They pretended to be quite able to reconcile Cedro with the cosmos. I don't know about that. They may have been as bad as I was, but trying a little harder not to admit it. I'm not trying to be appealing. I'm trying to be brutally frank.

Things were happening in the world that spring. It seems there had been a financial panic in March, 1907, followed by hard times. President Theodore Roosevelt was carrying on a tremen-

dous campaign against malefactors of great wealth. The nineteenth century, which had lingered a few years past its appointed time, was dying at last; and a good many things that a great many of us loved were dying, too. Only I didn't know all this. I didn't happen to notice. I didn't suspect what my generation was in for.

I was going to be a journalist. But I wasn't reading the newspapers. I was a poverty-stricken working student, but that wasn't what I felt like. It seems queer to me now, how easy I was in my mind and how lackadaisical.

William, Harry George and I were almost as lacking in actual cash as the poor devils in the bread lines, shivering that winter and spring on the Bowery in New York. It was a major tragedy when a careless Palo Alto tailor, mending one of my two pairs of pants, burned the knees so badly with his flatiron that my knobby bones immediately went through them—and we compromised by my paying six dollars for a brand new pair. At my normal rate of spending, six dollars would have lasted me for weeks, even months.

Poverty, in the form in which it touched us at Cedro, didn't hurt. It doesn't hurt now, as I look back at it. It didn't feel like poverty. It was honorable, interesting and usually pleasant. It didn't spoil the taste of spring.

I don't mean to protest too much. Working students did suffer when they had menial or unpleasant jobs. Often they had little or no time for companionship and not enough for sleep, going from classroom to job and from job to classroom endlessly. We three at Cedro happened to be lucky, and William and I were lucky in the years that followed. Not all the gold of the Mother Lode could have bought us that year at Cedro.

I see that I have written several pages, without conveying much idea of what that spring was like. I guess I can't manage it. There aren't words for it. It was tranquillity with a thrill. But that isn't quite it. For me, it was the last pause before life began in earnest.

The quail went in single file through the hedges, each with a nodding little plume. I wouldn't have shot one for a million dollars. One night, going in the darkness to the little house in the garden, I heard a curious minor song. I lit a match. The mother cat was escorting a small herd of kittens, also in single

file, from somewhere to somewhere else. She was making a sweet little maternal sound. I let the match go out and stood there for some time, listening. The air was full of little wooing and maternal sounds.

On an evening such as this I think the Professor would take a stroll around the place, making note of what was going on. I cannot say how spring affected him. Perhaps he himself could not have said. He had emotions, no matter how well concealed. They could not have resembled William's emotions, or Harry's, or mine, except in being, in a general way, human. But he was certainly human, no matter how hard he tried to conceal it. And he was too intelligent not to know that he was also a part of nature, and that by no withdrawal, no materialism, could he escape the universal brotherhood.

He knew it was spring. He knew what went on. He knew about the quail—he had observed them. He knew that no cat in spring is master of its impulses. He knew more about the biological and mechanical workings of Cedro than any of the rest of us would ever notice. I have no doubt spring pleased him because these workings were then made manifest.

So I see him quite clearly, walking by night, like God in the garden of Eden, but without that Person's desire to enforce rules. I see him stopping to inspect the cows and horses, walking past the henhouse, sniffing a little and deciding that William and I might be asked to clean it,<sup>1</sup> examining the stars with a critical but never disapproving eye. I see him quick and lithe, not touched as yet by any physical frailty. I see him enjoying spring, as Archimedes or Pliny the Elder (but not Benvenuto Cellini) might have enjoyed it, and noting this enjoyment as objectively as he noted other natural phenomena.

Perhaps it was at this time that he had more inclination than before to go into the hills. He was not a predictable machine. He could be restless, like the others of us. I think the rattle of the

<sup>1</sup> We were asked to and we did. The job took our minds off the more delicate aspects of spring, at least for the moment. The odor of a henhouse is pungent. It does not upset a youthful stomach, but in time one tires of it. On the contrary, the smell of a stable may be fondly preserved for many years in the memories of those who like horses and do not mind cows.

buggy wheels or the clomp of hoofs had a soothing effect upon him.

The approach of spring, and of the end of the college term brought the old element of uncertainty into our lives. Stanford had no summer classes at that time, except in the marine biological laboratory at Pacific Grove, and we were going to be foot-loose for three months.<sup>2</sup> Somehow it seemed easier to work for board and room during the college year than to work for money during vacations. When one worked for money one got into the labor market, as one did not do as a student. One might have to compete with California's floating workers, who did not always know Latin, medieval history, economics or French, but knew their own jobs better than most students did. It was not from Veblen alone that I acquired a respect for "common labor."

The adroit salesmen who visited college campuses at about this time of year, and their equally adroit student accomplices, were on hand this spring as usual. William and I might have gone on the road again with stereoscopic views or magazines and books of etiquette. Some of our contemporaries did, and very successfully, too. I knew a red-headed young man, of no particular sparkle or allure, who regularly returned from a summer of selling something or other with about five hundred dollars. This was sufficient to support him for a college year in reasonable comfort. There were others who went to Alaska to work in the salmon fisheries. The budding engineers sometimes got summer jobs working transits or carrying chains. Curry of Palo Alto and Yosemite, in whose Palo Alto furniture store William, as I have already related, did some work one summer, also took a few students to do chores in his big camp under Glacier Point. I applied to him one rainy Saturday, but I couldn't think of any good reason why he

<sup>2</sup> William and I attended the 1909 summer session at Pacific Grove, keeping bachelor quarters in a tiny two-room cottage, living quite well for twenty-five cents a day apiece for the food we cooked ourselves, and having a grand time. I was janitor at the laboratory in the summer of 1910, and if I had space I would tell how I took a course in grasshoppers under William M. Mann, then a student of entomology, later director of the National Zoological Park in Washington, and how ignominiously Mann flunked me (his only pupil) when I failed to determine what happened to what the grasshopper ate after it had eaten it. I don't know to this day.

should hire me. He evidently couldn't, either. I dropped my wet umbrella on his foot, picked it up and backed out.

Probably I didn't really want a job. In the words of Will Irwin's immortal campus song, I didn't want to be hurled into the world. Cedro suited me. William, I believe, was more enterprising and more conscientious—irritating qualities, I must say, in anybody's brother, but which have fortunately mellowed with the years. I couldn't see much sense, when one was leading a placid and comfortable life, in going out looking for an uncomfortable one. Not that I was not ready for adventure. I would have welcomed the idea of going to Alaska, for instance. It was having to work under uninteresting circumstances that distressed me. In short, Cedro Cottage and its master had spoiled me, though I can't see that they intended to.

At this juncture the Professor let it be known that he was going away for the summer. He didn't say where he was going, and to this day I don't know where he did go. But his lease of Cedro hadn't run out, and he couldn't very well take two ponies, two cows and forty chickens, not to mention the cats, with him. So he told us that if we wished to stay on at Cedro, one or all of us, we could do so.

Harry George accepted at once. He wasn't well enough to roam the West looking for work, nor ill enough to have to leave the Santa Clara Valley during the dry season. William and I doubtless accepted provisionally, hoping (or possibly, in my case, fearing) that we could find work of some sort within reach of Cedro. And, for a while, we did.

I don't remember much of the last week or so of college, nor do I recall any formal leave-taking with Veblen. I suppose he packed up some belongings and that one of us drove him down to the railway station. Just as he had seemed to appear, and to have been there always, when we first went to Cedro, so now he disappeared and for a while only the memory of him was there.

It was not dramatic, this end of our living with Veblen. I shall not try to make it so. His personality was not wholly withdrawn from the place. The memory was an actual presence. The things he had worked with and been interested in remained. In looking

after them during that summer of 1908, as William and I did for a while, and as I did with Harry George's company for the rest of the time, I still felt that I was working for him.

Accordingly I have no hesitation in giving some account of what went on at Cedro from the beginning of June through August, though Veblen had no direct share in it. We shall get back to Veblen in due season.

With Veblen gone we still had our lodgings but must scratch for our board. Some kitchen supplies were necessarily left on hand when he departed. I find from my old account book<sup>1</sup> that I kept careful track of them, and that they amounted to a grand total value of \$1.30. I presume this indicates that Harry George shopped for the Professor, toward the last, in an extremely cautious manner. Harry wasn't going to let our patron be left with a lot of groceries on hand which he couldn't help eat. There was a little flour, a little sugar, "1/4 box of crackers at 10 cents," which I valued at 2½ cents, 25 cents' worth of soap, 10 cents' worth of beans, 10 cents' worth of pepper and salt, 25 cents' worth of chocolate, 15 cents' worth of baking powder, 25 cents' worth of whole wheat flour. That seems to have been all. Harry George and the Duffus boys must have been painstakingly honest in those days.

I find another notation, to the effect that we delivered to a Mrs. Long, on Veblen's account, three hens, one broom, one dustpan, one ginger-jar, one mattress, one spring, two pillows, two pillow-cases, and two sheets. Just why the Professor was getting rid of these things, especially the last five items, I can only conjecture. The cows disappeared, and also the remainder of the hens.

<sup>1</sup> I referred to this account book earlier in this narrative. It has a number of things in it besides figures; for instance, the first paragraphs of three short stories that were never written, the last one terminating with the words, "Oh, hell"; an inventory of "articles in trunk," complete except that no articles are to be found under this heading; a blotter from a bicycle firm in San Jose; an actual inventory, in my father's handwriting, of some cooking and eating utensils we had turned over to Ed Warren when we went to Cedro; and, on one page, the bold inscription, in my own childish hand: "Bathing will return soon and perhaps before." Many questions arise. Didn't I know I was bathing? Why did I have to write it in a notebook? And why didn't I keep a diary (I did later, when nothing much was going on) and save myself all the trouble I have had trying to recapture those Cedro days?

I don't believe the Longs took all the hens. Realistically speaking, I suppose the Professor sold them off here and there. I amuse myself with the speculation that they reverted completely to nature and took to the hills, where their descendants still survive in a wild state. But I do not guarantee this thought and I know my brother William would not endorse it.

The Long family are fresh in memory because they provided William and me with our first job that summer, and me, after an interval, with my last one. Mr. Long was an engineering student from Texas, in his early thirties. He had worked on the San Pedro breakwater, and was therefore competent to supervise the construction of a home for Mrs. Long and a small but energetic and vocal son, on a site near the county road, across the oak-punctuated meadow from Cedro. It occurred to Mr. Long, who hadn't too much money to spend, that he could build thrifitly by doing some of the work himself, hiring an all-round carpenter and painter to handle the careful details, and getting William and myself to provide the brawn.

At twenty-five cents an hour, this appeared to us an ideal arrangement. We could save money on it. The old carpenter and painter turned out to be a man of crotchets, who did not approve of us from the start. I believe that he was a union man and that his conscience was troubling him. William and I, as soon as we touched a hammer or a paint brush, were taking away some union man's job, for we didn't know enough to belong to any union. We should have felt some pangs of conscience ourselves, and perhaps did. But we did need the money, and it was wonderful to have a job five minutes' walk from the Cottage.

I suppose not many college students in those days understood much about labor unions, even when they took courses in "labor problems," as information in this field was rather condescendingly labeled. My father had been a good, though never uncritical member of the union in his own trade. In the spring of 1907, or thereabouts, William and I had heard that college undergraduates were being taken on by the United Railroads in San Francisco, whose regular employees were on strike. The wages offered were good—they usually were in such cases. My father did not

take high moral ground. He said we had better not go, because we would get our heads knocked off.<sup>2</sup>

But the Long project didn't seem to be a part of the industrial battleground. It seemed quite peaceful, except when the old carpenter discovered William or me doing something wrong and told us about it. While the two of us were there together, at any rate, there wasn't much carpentry. We began by digging a little cellar. A foot or two below the surface we struck hard pan. We would chip away at this substance in the daytime with pick and shovel and fill the hole with water at night. In the morning there would be a little mud at the bottom and more of the hard pan under that. I must have grown lazy at Cedro. I remember swinging my pick one hot morning, and suddenly beginning to wonder if this were really me. It didn't seem in character, somehow, for me to be working as hard as that. I had been a delicate youngster. People back home in Vermont used to wonder whether I would live to grow up or not. I had overheard them wondering and it had left its mark on me, giving me an excuse for not doing some things I didn't wish to do. I didn't wish to dig hard pan. But I was digging hard pan. Here I was, killing myself all day long, but ticking along as regularly as any watch and eating like a horse. I must have been at least one tenth as strong as a horse. But it wasn't natural.

After a few days Mr. Long modified his plans as to the size of the cellar. Perhaps he saw that he could have a big cellar or a house, with the money he had to spend, but not both. He decided to have a house. So if any one cares to inspect what used to be the Long residence he will understand why there is a cubby-hole rather than a cavern underneath the kitchen. He might take his hat off, too. Much sweat was shed there.

The house was about to take shape. Then the old carpenter's conscience, or his indigestion, or whatever it was that ailed him,

<sup>2</sup> We would have, too. The strikers were in earnest. In one district, the Potrero, I believe, policemen had to ride the cars for six weeks after the strike was theoretically ended. A lady in a San Francisco settlement house told me this, and quite proudly, for she loved those people. She didn't condone their violence, nor do I. But she understood the provocation. It was mad and wicked but there were some sturdy qualities behind it.

got the better of him. Mr. Long tactfully informed us that our services, valuable though they had been, would no longer be required. We had a few dollars saved—and I mean a few dollars, not several hundred—and I didn't worry. I wasn't accustomed to looking more than a week or two ahead. William may have worried, but not for long. Presently there came an offer from a friend who was running the Coffee Club in Stockton. Since William had had experience in a similar institution in San Jose, as I have previously mentioned, he was the man for the job. He packed up and went away, sure of his keep for the summer, and something over. The three of us were not given to indulging our emotions but I think we all felt some sadness. The Cedro community was going to pieces. We might never be all together again. It had been good while it lasted. We hadn't quarreled seriously. We had had our jokes. You can't be sure of those things anywhere, in or out of college. And this was, in fact, the last time William and I lived together for any length of time under the same roof. Something of our youth went with this break-up, and never came back.

Still, I won't say that Harry George and I were gloomy, even though Harry had a load on his shoulders that he didn't talk much about, and the weight of which I didn't realize.

None of my former employers sent word that they wanted me back again. As far as I ever learned, and I did not make a point of inquiring, they were happy to let bygones be bygones. Harry got a job as gatekeeper on the edge of the University grounds, where the Embarcadero Road emerges upon the Camino Real. There wasn't much for him to do there, for the gate was kept closed and most people preferred to go around by the other entrance rather than argue about it. So Harry sat placidly by the gate in the sun, or could, if he chose, retire into a little brick gatehouse, where there was a stove if he wanted to cook something for lunch.

I lent him my bicycle, and he rode down there in the morning, a distance of about two miles, with a slight downhill grade. At first he used to ride the bicycle back at night. Then he grew too tired for that. I didn't fully realize what this tiredness meant,

but in my newly recovered leisure, with a dollar or two for buying the necessary food, and no other expenses, I found a way to help him. When his quitting time came I would saddle Beauty and ride her down. Then he would ride Beauty back and I would ride the bicycle back. I was strong enough then to ride a bicycle up the side of a barn.

One day, as I was trying to saddle Beauty, I pulled too hard in my efforts to get the wind out of her, and the girth broke. After that I used to ride her bareback, galloping hard past the front of the University quadrangle in case any one was around to admire my horsemanship, and Harry would ride her home, not trying to show off but looking very easy and handsome. I would have given half a dozen teeth to look the way Harry did on a horse.

At the Professor's request I took the other pony to the Wells's in San Jose, a seventeen-mile jaunt down the main highway. I don't recall being annoyed by other traffic at any point, even as I passed through the city's main streets. Harry George was rather proud of my trip, for he had taught me all that I hadn't learned by hard knocks about staying on a horse. And even Harry's mild approval was worth as much as a blue ribbon at a horse show. He saw that I was flattered, and hastened to add that if I had had brains instead of sawdust in my head I would have ridden one horse and led the other. Then I could have had a horse to ride back on and so saved the Professor fifty cents in railway fare. Harry said that if the Professor wasn't reduced to penury it wouldn't be my fault. He said he supposed I took it for granted that half dollars grew on trees.

I think Harry enjoyed being down at the gate, for people used to stop to talk with him. Among them were a number of bums, or, more accurately, blanket stiffnesses. A blanket stiff was a self-respecting migratory worker who carried his own bedding, and so drifted up and down the state, following the fruit, as the saying went, or picking up other odd jobs now and then when he needed cash. He was dirty but carefree. Something went out of life in California when he motorized himself with a rattletrap flivver and became a subject for Mr. Steinbeck.

Harry used to report on his conversations. I believe he was

hobnobbing with some of the first Wobblies<sup>8</sup> who passed our way. He said these men weren't ignorant. Some of them had read a good deal and had ideas. These ideas weren't too far different from Harry's, or from Veblen's, either, though the language was different. A kind of ferment was stirring. A man who walked around with his blankets on his back, with no permanent home and no permanent woman, looked at institutions with as much aloofness and disrespect as any Norwegian agrarian.

I am sure Harry didn't talk down to any one. He probably told his visitors about Veblen and William James, in case they hadn't already read those authors, and I have no doubt he quoted *The City of Dreadful Night* to them. They would have liked that. Harry knew by instinct a truth that many who try to talk to "working men" (or write for them or about them) never learn, namely, that there is no such animal. A working man was to him as much an individual as a professor was. He wasn't a class or a mass, or any undifferentiated fraction of one. So with Harry and his passing friends each meeting was an adventure, and it was all free and easy and give and take. If they knew anything he didn't seem to know they told him about it, and if he knew something they didn't seem to know he told them, and no one felt superior or inferior to any one else. The manners of the Golden Age prevailed there at the Embarcadero gate.

I made a few efforts to find work in Palo Alto. I didn't try hard, though I pretended to. Life without work was pleasant, and at the rate of somewhere between twenty-five cents and thirty-five cents a day for food my money, left over from the Long job, would last quite a while. I wasn't going out in society, the way Harry was when he took his post at his gate, but I got along. There was plenty to do, such as getting up late in the morning, reading, wandering around the place, or hitching Beauty into the cart for a drive among the foothills.

I wrote a few short stories. I think I sent two or three to the *Saturday Evening Post*, being under the impression that what

<sup>8</sup> Members of the Industrial Workers of the World. These gentlemen certainly had their faults, but they possessed one priceless virtue denied, so far as I know, to all American revolutionists, before or since—they had a sense of humor.

that periodical needed was some new blood. I had to write them by hand, no longer having access to a typewriter. This may have been one of the reasons why they were rejected.

There was a large volume of Shakespeare in the Professor's library (or maybe it was a left-over from Ariel Lathrop's time), a battered affair, set in big type and illustrated with old-fashioned wood cuts. I propped it up in front of me on the big table in the dining room while I ate my solitary lunches. In this manner I read most of Shakespeare that summer, though I could never take the sonnets at a gulp but only by snatches. I brought some of my newly acquired Veblenian insight to the reading and perceived that in *Coriolanus*, as in the second part of *Henry the Sixth*, and in a good many other places, the sagacious Bard had catered shamelessly to the prejudices of the carriage trade.

Harry George evidently decided that my slothful existence was not good for me. He didn't become arbitrary, for this would have led to words between us. Besides, it wasn't his way. He just took it for granted that it was painful for me not to have a job, and what about my future? I said that unemployment was painful, all right, but that I was accustomed to hardship and would try to bear up, and I didn't want him to feel sorry for me.

I began to take Beauty out quite a lot. This was useful, for a horse—even a small horse, such as Beauty was—needs exercise. I believe I drove her clear up King's Mountain once, to the top of the ridge, where you could see the ocean. This was rather a climb, and mostly I drove up and down the foothill roads. These were sometimes of dirt or dust, occasionally of macadam, never of cement or concrete. They were lonely, in all the bright warmth of summer, with a loneliness that has passed from that region forever. Once I picked up a man, a roofer, trudging a few miles to his next job. He told me how roofing was done, and even intimated that I might easily get work as a helper. I listened politely, but I didn't pursue the inquiry. I wouldn't have minded being a roofer. I have always liked scrambling around. But I didn't feel like bothering.

Mostly I was alone on these drives, and rarely did I have conversation with any one. Where there was visibility for a mile or

so in each direction, and I was sure of not being caught at it, I would drive along singing at the top of my voice. I had the happiness of a healthy animal, not wanting much that I didn't have, contented with the hour and moment, with no physical aches, and no mental ones, either. There were no women in that summer. The feeling for them was diffused, in sunshine, in the placid brownness of the hills, in daydreaming.

Harry George was still sorry for me. I decided to prove to him that I had energy and ambition. I told him I was going to ride my bicycle down to San Jose and look for work. He thought this would be a good idea. I was disconcerted. Didn't he realize that this might mean leaving him alone at Cedro? He did, but my need for a job came first. He wasn't going to stand in my way. One morning I set off. It was pleasant riding down the spacious valley. I sang to myself, and saw behind the modern façade of ranches and little towns and ordinary people the softened outlines of the California of the Spaniards; the Padres walking, or jogging along on mules; the missions, with their sweet bells; the cattle on the hills and the horsemen with them; the vineyards and the adobe houses; and I heard the sleepy strumming of guitars.

The older California wasn't entirely gone. A few years later, when I made my horseback trip from Pacific Grove to Palo Alto, I was riding along a shore road, below Santa Cruz, when I came upon a Roman Catholic church, or chapel, just as a double file of little girls in the veils of the first communion came out, a kindly old priest shepherding them. The bell was ringing. We were just above the placid and sunny sea. It was like a scene out of what one thinks Southern Spain or Italy may once have been, or the Mediterranean coast of France. I would have dismounted and stayed there if I could, the New England Puritan dead in me, wanting nothing more than some hazily imagined outdoor work with vines, apples, garden or cattle on seaward-looking hills—and of course some dark girl with blossoms in her hair. The picture was to stay with me always. But I went on, eastward, away from the sea.

Again, there were old adobe buildings, untenanted, falling into ruins, in the heart of Monterey when I first went there. Where

the Pebble Beach Lodge, for golfers and the correct type of tourist, was later built, between Pacific Grove and Carmel, I came upon a Chinese fishing village, which smelled so badly that I wanted to hold my nose and was so lovely that I hated to leave it. I have heard people speaking Spanish, with English as a second tongue, along the coast below the Big Sur, when only trails went through and life was lived almost as simply as it had been a century earlier. There is a motor highway through there now, but there wouldn't be if they had asked me about it first. I saw deer there, leaping more with joy than with alarm when they got the human scent. I caught trout with no more than the shred of the integuments of a grasshopper on the hook—and I am no fisherman.

So, when I saw these old things on the main road between Palo Alto and San Jose, which was the main road between San Francisco and Los Angeles, I was not wholly imagining them. Behind the lazy dust, within the fog that came down a hill on the land side of the Coast Range, they were there. They were *there*.

For me, they were too much there to keep me in the mood of a brisk young American looking for a job. I rode my bicycle into San Jose, under the straddling steel tower that some people said had leaned over and touched the earth during the earthquake of 1906,<sup>4</sup> past the stores and, definitely, past the employment bureaus. I rode over to the library, went into the periodical room and did some thoughtful reading. It was cool in there, and restful, too.

I didn't want to leave Cedro. I wanted to lie fallow, like a field that has been used for corn and is now turned back to clover. I wanted to lie on the brown earth and soak in the sunlight. I wanted things to go by me. I didn't want to get up and run with them. I wanted a lot of things I could not formulate. But I didn't want a job.

Toward the end of the afternoon I rode home again, against the wind that in summer always blows down the valley. People

<sup>4</sup> I have always been suspicious of those people, but I wasn't there at the time, and I have no way of proving that they stretched the truth. They could always point the tower out to any one who doubted their assertion.

spoke of it as a trade wind, it was so steady, and I liked to think of it as blowing ships along—as it still did, along the Pacific, here and there, before they laid the sailing ships up to rot in the Alameda Estuary, or converted them into hulks.

It was a good wind to sail with or pedal with, but not an easy one to pedal against. Riding into its teeth along the nearly level valley floor was like riding up a mild but unrelenting grade. But I was going back to Cedro. It was not wise, it was not virtuous, it was not enterprising, to be doing this. I have trouble in deciding what made me do it, why I let myself be beaten back into Cedro's shelter. I had good qualities of persistence, and a certain amount of ingenuity, when working at tasks I liked, or which I had convinced myself were necessary. I was, as I have not hesitated to reveal, a sentimental youth, imagining the world a great deal better than it usually is, but I was not weak-willed—once I had done the willing.

I think the absent Veblen had much to do with the fixation I seem to have had on Cedro. He had given the place its original significance, to which I had added (and Harry George and William, each for himself, of course, each in his own way) my own interpretation. You could fight Veblen in your soul, as I continually did, but even the echo of his personality held you. Why I should break out in a rash of sentimentality when under the influence of the least sentimental of men I don't pretend to explain.

I do know that something inside me was thawing out there at Cedro and that I instinctively refused to interrupt the process. The student sales manager who had sent me out on my unfortunate stereograph vending expedition the summer before had told me when I came back and he was offering me new territory, that this was a turning point in my life, and that if I didn't go out and make good he had serious doubts as to my future. As I recorded in my earlier pages I didn't go out and make good. Perhaps it was a turning point, just as he predicted. If so, Cedro completed the turn. I didn't know yet what I had been born for, but I knew what I hadn't been born for.

So I walked in on Harry George around sunset, looking, I am sure, disconsolate. I wasn't accustomed to sinning against my

heritage, and my conscience was giving me some sickly admonitions.

Harry asked me if I had found anything.

No, I said, there weren't any jobs in San Jose.

I didn't like to lie to Harry, but I did want to keep his respect. And I couldn't even begin to tell him the truth. I didn't know what the truth was, not even as well as I know it now.

Harry said this was too bad. He was genuinely sorry for me, and didn't argue with me or make fun of me that night. That made me feel badly. It was almost uncanny to have Harry in an overtly sympathetic mood. But I couldn't do anything about it. I had to put up with it.

Next day life resumed as before. I went back to reading Shakespeare and writing short stories. I have been looking some of them over. They are no good. They aren't even promising. But they do bring back a good deal: the peace, the sweet laziness, the absence of anxiety and tension, the smell of dust and tar-weed, the formless, confident hope. This was my South Sea island, without enemies. This was my summer in Arcady, without love, indeed, but with a great love of living. Here I recruited myself between campaigns.

Often, in writing these pages, I have thought of what it meant to healthy American boys thirty-five years later to be passing their twentieth summer. Boys who were nineteen or twenty in 1908 may have been fortunate or they may not have been. Who is to say? Who is to measure the dream against the deed, the untested against those who walk through fire? I think I was fortunate. I don't know.

I don't know. Certainly I achieved no tangible thing that summer. And these others, of whom I think as I write—what haven't they done, and endured, and preserved, on land, in the air, by sea?

My generation's test was to come a few years later. And, in a way, it is still continuing.

The days went by. I still had a few dollars left. I could see the Long house forming itself across the meadow, but some feeling of delicacy kept me from going over for a closer look. One morn-

ing Mr. Long dropped in again. He had had an extra carpenter, a union carpenter, but now he was gone. If I wanted to come back I could have a job.

Since the work came to me instead of my having to hunt for it, and since it did not detach me from Cedro, I accepted gladly. In this fashion I spent the rest of the working days of the summer, or most of them. The old carpenter was neither more nor less agreeable than he had been earlier. He remained a stern disciplinarian, but he showed me some things. You do not (or did not then) lay a floor by crawling around on your hands and knees, though this may seem the natural way. You stand up. You fit the tongue of one board into the groove of the next. Then you bend over to drive the nails, and the hell with how your back feels. You ought to get the nail in with not more than three blows—one to start it, one to send it flush with the wood, or almost, and one to finish it. If you wish to get along with old carpenters you do not leave hammer marks on the wood. And, as my brother William reminds me, you do not hammer your own nails, as he did once when the old carpenter was standing by to see how he was proceeding. You get no sympathy.

Your back does ache after half an hour of this. Old carpenters enjoy that. You are clumsy and slow. Old carpenters enjoy that, too, especially if you are a college boy and they think you feel superior. God knows I didn't feel superior. I respected the old man. I even came to like him, though he would have resented this if he had known. He knew his trade. He had *the instinct of workmanship*. When I got to painting he said that when he was an apprentice every carpenter had to handle a brush for three months—"to get the feel of the brush," he said. I learned from him, even as I had learned from Veblen. The two men, I think, would have understood each other a good deal better than most of the Stanford professors (there were conspicuous and honorable exceptions) understood Veblen.

After a while, as the house neared completion, I saw what a beautiful job it was. Many of the cupboards and drawers were being built in, and their workmanship was of a sort I could never aspire to—not in a lifetime. I didn't think then, and don't think

now, that anything men do with words is more a credit to the human race than the things skilled men can do with wood.

I sat at that old carpenter's feet, but not when he was looking. I have seen two, perhaps three, as good carpenters since then, but never a better one.

The windows were in at last, and I was set to cleaning the paint, with denatured alcohol, from a million diamond panes. For the first time that summer I lost my sense of physical well-being. Every hour or so I quietly put down my cleaning rags, went off into the meadow, and was sick. Then I came back and resumed my work. This mild heroism was part and parcel of the same young man who had disgraced himself on that ridiculous expedition to San Jose, and if I haven't already explained the contradiction I can't do so. I got well, but I learned enough about denatured alcohol not to care to drink it during prohibition years.<sup>5</sup>

The work on the Long house lasted me until it was nearly time to go back to college. Aside from the window-cleaning, it was pleasant. There was naturally no more digging, no more cement mixing. I began to see results. I learned how houses were built. They would never again be a mystery to me. It was a good life, with some time left for Shakespeare, and even a little for more worthless short stories. I liked it. And my conscience didn't bother me any more. I had my cake and I was eating it, too.

The summer was waning, in warm sunshine, in that perfume of tarweed that I have already mentioned, and that no flower fragrance can push out of my memory,<sup>6</sup> in long evening talks with Harry George, in the occasional rattle of wheels and thin echo of mixed laughter from the highway, across the fields, in the pleasant howling of the coyotes. It was ending in quiet beauty, and, I suppose, a realization on my part that Acadian interludes couldn't ever last long.

<sup>5</sup> I may have drunk a little, without knowing it. Decidedly, I didn't care to.

<sup>6</sup> I have often thought that women who use perfumes to catch men (if they do) have overlooked some opportunities. Tarweed essence would always have appealed to me. I am told that new-mown hay has been tried—it should have been. Wood smokes—cedar, for instance—would be worth experimenting with, and so would seaweed. Perhaps these things would inspire affection rather than passion, but, after all, there is something to be said for affection.

It was the last of the womanless spaces. There was no Eve in that garden, except an imaginary one. The one with dark hair. Her eyes were fathomless. She walked with flowing draperies. But she didn't bother me much.

Harry George's tent had stood a long time, as it now seemed, down the path, beyond the fig tree. It had an air of permanence, flimsy though it was. It belonged there, in that landscape. He belonged in it. But soon now it was to come down, leaving an oblong, trodden place that another winter's rain and another spring's growth would fill in with grass. I suppose that spot is still different from any other spot. Nature had been interfered with there, and would never catch up. I wonder if the poison oak shrub by the fence recuperated from our subtle attacks on it, and came back.

Soon it would be over. Harry George was to give up his gate-tending and resume his weary migrations. This I knew. There was no help for it. The sense of something finished should have weighed on me. It does now as I think of it. I am sorry that that summer is over.

I wasn't especially sorry then. I remember one of my last evenings at Cedro, but the memory is not poignant. It centers upon the acquisition of a new pair of corduroy pants. As these were durable and it was campus tradition never to have them cleaned, much less pressed, they were an economy.<sup>7</sup> But, since freshmen and sophomores were not permitted to wear them, they were also a badge of the upperclassman. I was a junior. If Stanford University was what I took it to be I was half educated. I swaggered a little, all by myself, in those pants.

<sup>7</sup>One of my impoverished college friends bought himself a complete suit of yellow corduroy—a rather light yellow—in his junior year, and this lasted him through until graduation day. I think he went too far. I suppose he got used to the way he looked. No one else did. But he saved money, which was his intention, graduated with credit, and did well afterwards.

# I5

The Professor was giving up Cedro, and we were scattering. I was finding a job (actually it turned out to be a home, and in many ways influenced my whole life for good) with the Millis family. Harry George had lived with them once, and it was through his friendly offices that I was given the place. There was again no cash nexus, but there were board and room for easy work, and a hospitable welcome, as though I were some kind of relative and not merely a student without money. After it had all been arranged Harry let fall a word or two, I forget what, that revealed a mild jealousy. He wanted so much to be with his friends, and he had to go where there weren't any. Now I can measure the depth of his woe by that one passing remark. I couldn't then.

William took a similar position in the home of George Henry Danton, then acting assistant professor in the German department. The Dantons were young, and it was a lively household. The only unfortunate circumstance in this connection that I can think of at the moment is that the association with Danton confirmed William in a lifelong habit of punning.<sup>1</sup>

We had a kind of farewell party, though I don't believe Veblen regarded it as such. I have spoken of the shack that Veblen borrowed and re-erected in the mountains. When he was about to move away from Cedro he decided to return it. Possibly Mr. Lathrop urged this act of justice upon him, and possibly Mr. Lathrop knew nothing about it. At any rate the Professor engaged

<sup>1</sup> The only remedy for this is counter-punning, which does no good whatever. Danton afterwards taught in Peking, lectured at the Universities of Leipzig and Berlin, and was successively a department head at Oberlin College and Union College. He did an excellent book on *The Chinese People* and much scholarly work in his own specialty.

William, Harry George and myself to help him, procured a wagon and a team of horses to do the heavy hauling, and hitched Beauty to the cart, and we all went up the La Honda grade. Veblen, William and Harry went ahead in the cart and I drove the wagon team up. The cabin was partially demolished when I arrived. It looked as though it had been extremely comfortable, and I must have let my mind roam over what might have happened there. One thing was certain. If women had been there they hadn't dictated the furnishings, which were matter-of-fact and manlike. It was the kind of hideout the Professor would create for himself, and a visitor could like it or not, as she pleased.

If there had been a visitor I imagine she liked it. Or they liked it, if there had been more than one. A girl with a sense of proportion would have valued being there, sinfully alone with a great man she couldn't understand but who evidently had need of her. As I read history, women have always liked that sort of thing. They have liked to take great men and treat them as though they were old fuddy-duddies. And maybe they were. Maybe a good deal that eminent male creatures concern themselves with is plain foolishness. But I didn't go in for this kind of thinking then. I was wondering about romance, and did the Professor have any or didn't he?

The shack came down in short order, and we loaded it into the wagon. It had been built partially on stumps, and we left these. I have since wondered about Veblen's emotions as he looked at the spot for perhaps the last time. He was closing a chapter in his life, just as we were. If he had been another sort of man he would have wanted to be alone with it, and to make some sentimental gesture. Perhaps he had really said good-bye earlier and under other circumstances. No one but a woman who knew him intimately could tell about that. On this occasion he was outwardly as unmoved as Beauty herself, who might also have had some memories of the place.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he was less moved, for she whinnied a

<sup>2</sup>Veblen later had another shack in the hills. Mr. Dorfman (*Thorstein Veblen*, p. 498) says he had it repaired in 1927, two years before his death, and that "he was very particular that redwood blocks be used for the foundation instead of pine, since redwood would better resist decay." But about this second cabin I have no first-hand information.

little, and I thought she might have enjoyed her trips to the mountain, and the lushness of the grass up there, where the fog kept it green and tender.

It was near dusk when we finished, and we had supper before we started down. It was dark under the trees, and we needed light. The Professor, smiling at his own simple device, melted butter in a tin, soaked a string in it, pulled one end of the string up, lighted it, and had a candle. He said he had seen it done that way somewhere. Somewhere far off and a long time ago, I thought.

We were sitting across the road from the site of the shack. Veblen had his back to it. At least he wasn't looking at it. He talked in his soft tones about practical matters. The little flame in the butter dish danced. There was no traffic. I don't think anything had been by all day, unless it was a deer in the bushes that we didn't see. It was very quiet.

I think it was that evening that I took my leave of the Veblen of Cedro Cottage, though in my few later meetings with him I was always trying to discover this Veblen, and not doing so. It had been right for him to be at Cedro. It was right for him to be on that mountain. He belonged there. I am not sure that he belonged in some other places to which he went. I am not sure that he ever belonged in any city.

We started down the mountain, the others going ahead as before in the pony-cart, I following with the loaded wagon. In the recurrent fog, under the heavier shade, where the sun rarely touched, the road was muddy, even in early September. The straining horses pulled me through the first mud-holes, and I must have thought of Veblen's parade of the economic mud-hole.

But mostly I was lonesome, and a little awed. There was wilderness in the mountains then, not so much in the form of mountain lions, though they were said to occur, but in an untamed quality. Things were never quite matter-of-fact up there. There was a survival of something, I don't know what, a something that hadn't surrendered to the presence of man. To have the sensation of this something after spending many months under Thorstein Veblen's influence was strange. I could not have put it in any words that would not have seemed ridiculous to him. I cannot do so now.

Yet it was real. It was as real as the wagon and the horses and Veblen himself. I would have believed almost any well-constructed mythology about that mountain, would have done so, even, years later, when I knew it pretty well from rambling all over it on foot. That is to say, I would have wanted to believe, for there was actually something there that needed explaining.

After a while it was completely dark in the road, and there was only an afterglow overhead. The horses then stuck completely in an invisible slough, and stood, trembling a little, willing and friendly but powerless to go forward. I rubbed their patient noses and considered the situation. Then I unhitched them, left the wagon without any light whatever to warn other travelers—for none would come, and I had no light to leave—and arrived after a mile or two at a farmhouse.

I hadn't so much as a dollar with me, but the farmer and his wife took me in as though they had been expecting me. The man picked up a lantern and went out with me to look after the horses. Then we sat around the stove in the stuffy parlor, which was full of the relics of long living in that place—family photographs on the walls or propped up on the table, conch shells, a heavy book or two of the sort that used to be sold by subscription, a wall clock with some kind of forest scene painted on the glass in front. It was damp and chilly outside, I still had a mild sense of escape, and the warmth was pleasant. We talked of winter on the mountain, how they were sometimes cut off for days during heavy rainfall, how it sometimes snowed up there—as, indeed, I had seen from the valley. There was the sense of the sea on one side of the ridge, of the warm cultivated lands on the other. It was one of those lodgings for the night that I remember, though nothing of any importance was said, and I retain no impression of this middle-aged man and woman, except that they were quiet people, sunk in their daily habits, not struggling, neither happy nor unhappy.<sup>3</sup>

I slept deeply in a clean, soft bed, had a good breakfast and went

<sup>3</sup> That winter I wrote a story about a restless young man who started out to see the world and become rich and renowned, who came to such a house on a mountain, saw there a beautiful dark girl, put off his departure from day to day—and grew old there. Professor Seward, to whom I submitted the manuscript, smiled in his gentle way and asked me if I had ever read Stevenson's *Will o' the Mill*. I hadn't.

outside just as my host, who had gone out with a pair of his own strong farm horses, came up with the wagon. I started off in the usual thick fog of coast range mornings. Not far down the mountain I came out into sunshine and a view of the valley, and the Diablo Range, east of the bay, swam into sight. It seemed a good world to be driving a team of horses and a load of old lumber into. I went down singing as loud as I could. There was plenty to sing about. You could have the Santa Clara Valley for the asking that morning—all that was worth having in it. You could have the dream of it that you might make, with your eyes half-shut. Any dream. You could take your choice.

But Cedro wasn't included any more. We were finished with it, except as we might visit it once in a while—as we did. And this was the end of my continuous association with Thorstein Veblen. Veblen remained at Stanford sixteen months longer. William, as I have said, became one of his students. I was not qualified to do so, since I had not taken the elementary economics which was a prerequisite. Perhaps I could have persuaded him to admit me, since I had absorbed a good deal of elementary economics from his conversation and from the papers I had copied for him. Indeed, I copied a few more (this time for cash) during the fall of 1908. But my native drift, and the influences that were bearing upon me, were in another direction. I came back to him later. Nine or ten years after I left Cedro my wife read a number of his books aloud to me.

But, except when I typed his papers, and when William and I once put down matting in the room he had taken in a professor's house on the campus, I saw almost nothing of him during the remainder of his time at Stanford.

I remember just one other incident. He had brought the yellow male cat with him from Cedro. This animal, mild to a fault in its relations with human beings, was aggressive among its own kind. It at once entered upon an active social life, making the fur fly among its own sex, enforcing its masterful will upon the other. Veblen observed, with his slow smile, that there was scarcely a new kitten on the campus that didn't have some yellow in its spectrum. He said there was a perfect rainbow of new kittens. He seemed to

be proud of that cat. Indeed, we all were. It was, so to speak, a symbol of Cedro.

It was as if we all had a pride in Cedro itself—a kind of Cedro spirit, as an undergraduate would have thought of it—and were glad when anything from Cedro did well in the world. It was as if we were all going back to live there some day, and take up where we left off.

But we weren't.

Harry George stayed until October, retaining his place as gate-keeper, and I believe sleeping and cooking in the gate-house toward the last. I used to see him once or twice a day, as I walked or bicycled between the Millis house in Palo Alto and the campus, by way of the Embarcadero Road.

Sometimes, too, he came to the Millis house. The girl who subsequently became my wife never saw him, but she heard him one day when she dropped in at the Millises'. Harry was upstairs taking a bath. He had been told that the family would be absent for an hour or so, and that if he heard any one come in it would be me. When the front door opened and shut he evidently acted on this information and came out to the head of the stairs.

My future wife was treated to a flow of language which she was fortunately too young and innocent to understand. She did get the impression that somebody was telling somebody what he thought of him. Of course this was Harry's way of letting me know he was glad to see me, but a person not familiar with the Cedro Cottage dialect—and particularly a young girl—might easily have supposed otherwise.

My future bride (who had at that time no intention of becoming such) finally spoke up in a small, scared voice. "It's Miss Deane," she said.

A rush of embarrassed apologies came from upstairs and a door slammed. That was as near as Miss Deane came to making Harry George's acquaintance. I think she missed something.

Harry and I did try to keep on the old terms, but the most touching thing that I remember about this period is that as though by an unspoken agreement we finally stopped insulting

each other. Harry retained his smile and his limping swagger, but he didn't tell so many dirty stories and he didn't drag out so many obscene words and phrases to shock me with. I knew all the stories, words and phrases by that time, but this wasn't the reason.

I am now sure that he knew we wouldn't ever meet again, he and I, or he and William, or he and Veblen. He talked about dying, but I didn't believe him. Young people didn't die, I thought, except by accident. He said he wouldn't mind being dead. There was no bother about that. What he minded was the process of dying. It was nonsense to talk that way, I said—he wasn't going to die. I demanded, what in hell made him think of such things?

He told me a long story about a man he had encountered on one of his jobs—a foreigner of some sort, perhaps a German, who had studied medicine in his young days. This man had told Harry he wouldn't live beyond the age of thirty. Why he had to say this cruel thing I can't imagine. Perhaps he was a Nazi ahead of his time and liked to torment people. The memory troubled Harry, who was twenty-seven or twenty-eight. I argued that the man couldn't have been a real doctor or he wouldn't have been working at common labor. But Harry believed him more easily than he would have believed a real doctor. Harry had an almost superstitious faith in all sorts of irregular wisdom, though if you had called him superstitious he would have killed you. The man was obviously disinterested, he said, as a practicing physician, with his mind on his fee, wouldn't have been.

I changed the subject. We talked of many things. I was still reading William James, and when I think of James's theory of the fringe of consciousness or of his explanation of why many of us are embarrassed by great personages or by having to speak in public I always think of the little gate-house—not of Cedro.

It was peaceful enough there, though not as Cedro was. The gate-house was at the corner of the arboretum, and across the Embarcadero Road was an oak-dotted meadow, not yet marred by the swaggering stadium of later days. You had come down to the edge of the great world when you descended from Cedro to the gate-house, but you weren't yet inside.

Harry lent me a history of philosophy, and nagged me until I

read it through. He was still anxious that I shouldn't have illusions about the nature of the universe. He didn't want me to disgrace him in later life by believing in a God who was all-wise, all-good and all-powerful. He didn't want me fussing around with the idea of immortality. He seemed to want to rid me of all my ingenuousness about this world and the next before he left. But he was gentle in his arguments—too gentle. It was this final gentleness that alarmed me. The time came when I would have given a good deal to have him jeer at me again.

We made a compact. "After my death—" he began one day. He meant to put a final clincher on the notion of life after the bodily machinery had stopped operating.

I wouldn't have it that way. He smiled sadly and changed the form of his proposition. We would agree, he said, that whichever one of us died first would, if he were able, communicate with the other. He knew it couldn't be done, because after death there wasn't anything left to communicate with. I stuck to my point. I wasn't so sure. I said I might surprise him some night by standing at the foot of his bed, with the moonlight shining through me, and making terrifying noises. I said it would serve him right if it scared the hell out of him. He said he would take that chance.

I pointed out that he would have to play fair if he died first, because it was clear that if he had a soul and therefore a conscious survival he would be under a great temptation to keep still and not spoil his argument against survival. He bristled a little at this. He was a man of honor, he said, and would remain so even if all his theories were wrong and there actually was a future world. He'd let me know, he promised.

I reminded him that I was bound to get more satisfaction out of the bet than he could, for if he won by not surviving after death he would never know it; whereas I would know it if I survived and won and wouldn't know it if I failed to survive and lost.

He said he would take that chance, too. He was sure he was right. He could enjoy my discomfiture now, without having to wait until the evidence was all in.

The weeks went past.. Harry threw a party. William couldn't come and I don't believe he invited Veblen, being in great awe of

him, but Harry and I had his dream meal in the little gate-house: a thick slab of steak, drowned in butter, an abundance of sweet potatoes, also drowned in butter, a big pot of coffee, strong and bitter.

I was, as always in those days, hungry. It was a little chilly and damp in the gate-house, but the food warmed us. I pushed the plate away at last. He looked at me and grinned. I don't think he had much appetite, but seeing me replete for once was a kind of feast for him. We talked a good deal that afternoon—about everything, worldly and otherworldly, he the teacher. I the protesting but hypnotized student. He wanted to leave the imprint of his thought on me, in a way that Veblen never did. I think he succeeded. If I did not accept all his ideas I have had to wrestle with them all my life. In that way, as in many other ways, he survived beyond his mortal term.

He left for Tucson, Arizona, about the end of October. If he needed money I know that Millis, Seward and his other friends saw that he had it. He wouldn't have taken much—or any, except that it was a matter of life and death that he should get to a drier climate.

I can see him now as I saw him last: the very seat in the car into which he sank with a tired sigh, his battered luggage strewn about him, the yellow of his hair in the afternoon sunlight which came through the window, the valor of his smile. He smiled, well knowing that he was seeing his friends, and all this, this valley which had been home to him, for the last time.

He would not admit it in words or looks. I would not admit it at all. There was the final embarrassment of all such partings. What is there for the man safe in the trench to say when his friend is going out under the concentrated fire of the enemy?

I fell back on the prize-ring vernacular of the old Cedro days—and they did seem old, even then, almost as far off and irrecoverable as they do now.

"Get 'em in the corner," I said fiercely. "Get 'em in the corner and whale hell out of them."

He grinned, and I think the whole memory of our year, the tent, the house, the potterings about the warm Cedro kitchen, the

evenings when Veblen talked, all the youthful hopes, quarrels, idiocies and dreams with which the three of us—Harry and William and I—had beguiled our months together, came back to him.

The train was moving. I ran to jump off. I never saw Harry George again.

He wrote at long intervals, and briefly. The last feeble pleasantry I had with him was to fill a letter with statements about himself which he was to check and send back. He followed instructions scrupulously, putting an 'x' here and there and adding never a word of his own. We did learn that he was in Tucson, that he was boarding with a landlady who took a kindly interest in him (as what woman, old, middle-aged or young, ever failed to do?), and that he was feeling a little better.

By degrees I came to know that he was not better, and would not be. One night Professor Millis asked me if I would be willing to go to Tucson to find out what was really happening, and if necessary to see that Harry went to a hospital. I said, of course I would go. We made some preparations.

Then a letter came from Tucson, but not from Harry. The landlady was a warm-hearted, motherly person, full of emotion she was not able to express. She had thought a lot of Mr. George. He had been so anxious not to make trouble for any one. He had died suddenly, and she thought without much suffering. I was glad of that much. He had dreaded suffering. He had not dreaded death.

He had left a box of his books with me: some texts on philosophy and psychology, some of his lecture notes, possibly a Spanish reader and a manual of surveying. There was his life—the things he had cared most about, the things he had fitted in to make a living. His education. His profession. His escape. I read some of the notes. They show how hard he had tried not to miss anything. They were far, indeed, from the perfunctory scrawl of the student who puts down only what he guesses, or fears, the professor will ask questions about at the next examination.

I wanted to keep this material. I wish now I had, though I don't know how I would have managed to carry it all around during my numerous changes of address of the next six years. But I wasn't allowed to. I was myself regarded as a medically suspicious char-

acter.<sup>1</sup> The books and notes were burnt. I escaped what harmful contagion might have been in them, and also the benevolent contagion of the memories and emotions that physical objects bring back. All I have to remember Harry George by is a snapshot portrait, now so faded that only the dimmest outlines of his features are visible.

At first I don't believe I gave any thought to the bet we had made. His death seemed final, just as my father's had done. Later I did wonder about it a little. He was a young man of strong will power. If he had consciously survived he would have paid little attention to any rules, regulations or censorships that stood in the way of his communicating with the friends who were still in their mortal bodies. He never had too much respect for arbitrary authority. I do not think the discovery that he had been wrong about survival, and perhaps about God, would have held him back. He was no dogmatist. And he would have been glad to straighten me out about the universe, and possibly to point out some details in which I had been mistaken in my conception of it.

He wouldn't have let me down. I am sure of that.

I got to thinking about him one night in the spring of 1909—and was *that* a spring?—as I was walking home from the University along Palm Drive.<sup>2</sup> Palm Drive had, and I suppose still has, borders of date palms. The dates they produce, or used to produce, consist of a large pit and a thin layer of skin, and therefore are not articles of commerce. Still, the skin has a faint date-like taste and I presume I was trying to eat some. Maybe this made me think of Harry, sneering at me in some Cedro-like Elysium on the far

<sup>1</sup> I wasn't as healthy as I had been, that winter. A doctor told me I'd better take care of myself or something might "put a roof on me." I remember the exact words. He made me sell my bicycle, which was a sad inconvenience, because he said bicycling strained the heart. But I fooled him. I did quite a lot of bicycling during World War II.

<sup>2</sup> Maybe this was the first night I went to a meeting of the English Club, to which my short stories had brought about my election. The meeting was held in a sorority house. I must have walked two miles up and down the Row before I bolted in. This was the semester I was cutting up sheets, which I didn't need, for handkerchiefs, which I did. I made the mistake of pulling out one of these makeshifts while I was talking to a fair but fragile undergraduate who admired Rossetti. Two yards of white raveling came out with the handkerchief and I never did find out just what her reasons were.

side of the Milky Way—an Elysium with star-dust coming over some celestial Coast Range like a fog, and a God with some of the attributes of Thorstein Veblen and some of the qualities of William James—a God, perhaps, who didn't believe in Himself.

The blades of the palms rustled stiffly in a little wind. Behind them were eucalyptus trees, stiff-leaved, too, tall, ragged-barked, white-trunked in such light as there was. Off to my left was the Stanford family tomb, invisible among the trees but obviously there—and I wouldn't have gone that way after dark, in spite of Veblen and Harry George, for less than half a dollar paid in advance. I was as brave as could be, but I saw no use in taking needless risks for nothing. I had an imagination, and it was working.

So it occurred to me that if Harry were able to make good on his promise, and intended to do so, this would be as good a time as any. If I were to be haunted I believed I would rather be haunted outdoors than in. For one thing, if it were the wrong sort of ghost there would be more places to run to. I thought I would need all the room there was.

Then I reflected upon Harry's humor and his gentle cussedness; and I saw that he would be justifiably incensed, and would be in a position to put on all sorts of superior airs if out of a mere superstitious fear—and so he would have regarded it—I failed to keep my part of the bargain. His position would have been that if he could return he would be as natural a phenomenon as he had been in the flesh, and that it would be as foolish to be afraid of him as it would be to be afraid of a tangible student in a pair of tangible corduroy pants.

It was lonesome in the arboretum. The hack drivers who carried the affluent between Palo Alto and the campus had long ago gone to bed. The clanging bell of the rickety trolley car was no more to be heard. There were no passers-by. The stars, seen through the trees, were a long way off. The white tree-trunks were a glimmer that could almost take human shapes.

But I stopped.

This was Harry George I was speaking to—the young man whose tent I had shared, whose cooking I had eaten, whose dirty stories I had relished, whose intellectual adventures had been par-

tially mine. My friend, in short. One isn't afraid of one's friends.

"Come on," I said. "Come on, you old bastard." I added a few more epithets, so that he could be sure who it was that was summoning him. I gave him back all the words he had taught me, and invented a few phrases of my own.

I smiled to myself in the dark. He would understand that language. I was no longer afraid.

I heard no answering, familiar, insulting laughter. Even my strained imagination could hear none. Neither then, nor later. Not from him. Not from any one—and there have been one or two others with whom I might gladly have made this bargain.

Harry George was to haunt me in another way. Witness what I have tried to write about him.

My residence in the Millis household brought me an acquaintance, which lasted until I left California in 1919, with Ellen Rolfe Veblen, the Professor's first wife. Through her I learned to understand Veblen better, just as by knowing him I understood her better.

No two persons on earth could have been less alike. Where he rooted himself solidly in the provable fact, she was a mystic, relying on the inward and unprovable experience. Where he was always restrained, always on his guard, she was playful. Her laughter was as sparkling as his was quiet. She was all imagination, as he was all logic. Her extreme expression was fantasy, his a biting humor. In those days we did not think of the feminine as part of man's nature, or measure the percentage of masculinity in woman's nature; but in her thinking and feeling she was as purely feminine as a human being could be.

Her ways of thought were too whimsical to allow of her being called an intellectual, but in her gifts, in her own way, she was in no sense Veblen's inferior. She could never have been dull or unamusing. She probably arrived intuitively at many points which he reached by a reasoning process. If they clashed on the intellectual level it cannot have been because she did not understand him, but more probably because he could not understand her. He could never have traced the wayfaring of her mind, the blossom-picking of her fancy. The women who lured him away from her were not only younger (an explainable and common phenomenon); they were not only more physical; they were also, I am sure, more plain-spoken and simple, and disposed to take his reasons for things rather than insist on reasons of their own.

Yet I believe that to quite a large extent the finished product which Harry, William and I had found in Veblen, and which less fortunate persons read in his books, was Ellen Veblen's creation.

Mrs. Veblen's interest in Harry George had been evident. I think she would have mothered him if he had permitted it. After he went to Arizona she had a spell of writing short stories, sometimes one a day, and an etherialized version of Harry was evident in several of them. He wouldn't have recognized himself, except, perhaps, for his yellow hair, and she wouldn't have recognized the Harry George who taught me the unmentionable song. But, in plain intention, there he was. I can see now that his association with Veblen added to the interest he had for her. I think also that for her he resembled Veblen in his ways of thinking, though he was far more articulate and had a sparkle Veblen lacked.

I do not recall that she ever spoke to me of Veblen, or asked me about him, until the incident, many years later, to which I am coming. And, so far as I know, Veblen was not mentioned in the Millis family gatherings when she was present.

She seemed old to me, and she was, in fact, approaching fifty. She had no particular care for personal appearance, unless it was a whimsical delight in suiting her own taste and mood, without regard to prevailing styles. She can never have been beautiful, but she had the charm of quaintness. When she was gay (or wishing to appear so) her laughter had a youthful sound, and then even I, who still thought of youth and maturity as separate identities, not as phases of the same personality, could picture the girl she had been. She came to the Millis house both expectedly and unexpectedly, and at some stage of her visit there was always this unmistakable laughter, which I could hear through the door of my little rear room, off the dining-room. She always made me feel easy and comfortable and glad she was there.

She had rented a ramshackle bungalow in the meadow near Cedro Cottage. I do not remember seeing her there while I was at the Cottage, but my brother William is quite sure he did. She evidently wanted to be near Veblen. She wanted to be near the place where he had been. I don't believe she ever stopped loving him, even in her first realization that she could no longer live with

him. She found her compensations as best she could. One of them was theosophy, which to those who do not profess it seems to be fantasy, wishful thinking and logic mixed in about equal parts. She felt herself to be pyschic, and perhaps actually was, in the sense that she seemed to hear, see and experience things that other persons did not.<sup>1</sup>

She had a sort of playful practicality. After living for several years in the rented bungalow in the meadow near Cedro she decided to build a shack of her own. Some of the work on it she may have done herself—it looked as though she had. It had one feature which may seem insane to Easterners but was not at all so in California. This was a movable roof, which could be lifted by means of pulleys to allow the direct sunlight to come in during the day-time or the glimmer of moon and stars at night. There were hitches in the actual operation, but none in the conception.

I could imagine her wandering along country roads in the moonlight and thinking thoughts very much her own. Yet she was extremely sociable. When she bought a cabin in Carmel it was in the heart of that picturesque community, where Stanford professors retired for quietness and artists and writers went to wrangle, write and paint by the wine-dark sea. She liked children, and was sweet and patient with the young Millises. She practically adopted a young musician, who did not know his own gifts—nor the misfortunes that awaited him in later life. She even found a way to get money to him without letting him learn whom it came from.

It was not easy to picture her living with the Veblen I had known, sitting down to two or three meals a day with him, and not only asking him questions but telling him things. There was hardly anything she said that seemed to fit into Veblen's idea of conversation, much less into his idea of lack of conversation. Not even her humor was in his vein; she dealt in playful and sometimes extravagant incongruity, he in careful understatement.

<sup>1</sup> Northern California, like the weird region around Los Angeles, had its mystics. They worked as far south as Halcyon, near San Luis Obispo, where several Palo Altans went, and where Mrs. Veblen lived for a while. They were mild, poetic, socialistic dreamers—rather attractive people as I knew them. They felt that California needed a mythology, and maybe it did need one about as much as it needed super-highways and real estate developments.

In spite of Harry George's effort to educate me I did not know much about sexual intricacies, and so did not speculate about that phase of their relationship. But it could not have been satisfactory.<sup>2</sup>

She had one disadvantage that arose out of her very love and her very faithfulness. She had helped to create the Veblen who was such a mysterious figure to other women. She knew what he was made of and couldn't very well pretend she didn't. She could not flatter him as they did. She could only love him. And, I suppose, being buffeted around and not rated as highly as he should have been among his more conventional colleagues, he came to have a need for women's flattery.

I don't know how much her parting with Veblen changed her. It probably strengthened her natural tendency to escape from a real world into a more satisfactory unreal one. But she had had this tendency for a long time. I have been re-reading a child's book which she published in 1902, the *Goosenberry Pilgrims*.<sup>3</sup> My copy has been around the house for twenty years, while two girl babies were growing into young women. Each of them knew that the book had been written by an old family friend. But I found that the pages had not been cut beyond the first dozen or so. The girls hadn't been interested. At first thought this seems strange, for Mrs. Veblen collected a batch of characters out of Mother Goose and elsewhere—the Three Bears, the King of the Cannibal Islands, Miss Muffet, Wee Willie Winkie, the Crooked Man, Jack the Giant Killer, Robin Hood, and so on—that should have made any child clamor to finish the chapter before being sent to bed. The story has flashes of wit and drollery. What could be wiser than the comment on travellers' impressions?

So they all went on to see the world. They looked at it as hard as ever they could and said it reminded them of London.

But the story has the illogical quality of a dream. No one episode leads into another. It ends, as a dream would, with the Pilgrims trying to "make up their minds." Or it might be compared with

\* Mr. Dorfman touches on this point, *Thorstein Veblen*, p. 496. The evidence is conclusive.

\* Lothrop Publishing Company, Boston.

the stream-of-consciousness sort of narrative, in which incidents, words and ideas are there because they happen to pop into the author's mind: There is, of course, a relationship, but it may not be manifest to the reader—and in this case not to a child reader.

Ellen Veblen needed to discipline her imagination, just as Veblen needed to develop his. But she couldn't. The winds of life beat too hard on her, and like a leaf she danced to them. She was in the beginning of her autumn when I first knew her.

I remember her, fragile, angular and graceful all at once, and in a sea breeze, too, in her garden at Carmel. This was during the summer of 1909, when William and I were attending classes in marine biology at Pacific Grove. She had told us that if we came to Carmel we could spend the night in her cottage, since she did not expect to be there. I walked over alone one afternoon, through the pine woods, along the pipe-line, a distance, I suppose, of five or six miles. I stopped whistling as I came up to the cottage. She was there, in the garden, bending over tall, swaying hollyhocks. The flower and the woman seemed to me to belong together.

She did not see me. I hesitated. If I let her know why I had come she would be embarrassed at not having a place for me, or she would be put out by having to make one. And I suppose I had some curious notions about propriety. But there was also the feeling that there in her garden she was a kind of picture, inside a frame—that she had, for the moment, the kind of security and peacefulness of a lady in a garden in a picture.

I did not interrupt her and break the charm. I went back over the pipe-line, with the sea on my left hand, and surf breaking, and the thought of China and Japan out there somewhere (very alluring, very mysterious they were, in those days), and the fog coming in.

William, having finished his solitary supper, was glad enough to see me, but surprised.

"I should think you would have stayed," he said, after I had explained the circumstances.

"Well—" I answered. I couldn't explain, even to myself, why I hadn't.

This was the summer before we both graduated. The years were

rolling in fast now: rolling in, breaking and receding, as on that stern and lovely coast around Pacific Grove, and Carmel, and southward. So I saw Mrs. Veblen only a little after that.

Changes whirled us along. William went on a graduate scholarship to the University of Wisconsin, on his way to become a college professor in the field of economics. I became a newspaper writer, first in San Francisco, later in New York. It was during my San Francisco period that Miss Ida Tarbell, whose generous interest had got me my first newspaper job, on the *San Francisco Bulletin* under Fremont Older, suggested that I try a personality piece on Veblen for the *American Magazine*. The project came to nothing, for the editors of the *American* decided that I hadn't made Veblen exciting enough. And, anyhow, his vogue had not yet begun, as it did a few years later.

But in the effort to write about him I sought out Mrs. Veblen, then living in the Cedro meadow, and we talked about him—for the first time. Later I took the completed article to her and she indicated necessary revisions. A piece about Veblen, edited by Mrs. Veblen, would be worth publishing now, I think. It would be published in this book if I still had it, which I would have if I had had a small amount of foresight. But I hadn't. I saved many of my short stories, which no editor in his senses would ever have published. I threw away this real bit of Vebleniana, or lost it. At any rate, it couldn't be found when I began raking through my papers in search of it.<sup>4</sup>

So all I remember is that I talked long and confidentially with Ellen Veblen about Thorstein Veblen, in the little house over the tall hedge from Cedro Cottage. My own memories of Cedro, and consequently of Veblen, were poignant. Except for my father's death, and all the sad fragments of the earlier years that it brought up, I had been happy there. But Ellen Veblen's tragedy and her

<sup>4</sup>I am a child of careful New England and careless California. Consequently my saving and throwing away instincts are all confused. I keep unimportant things and discard important ones. I fail to answer letters, or I answer them after long intervals, and my conscience hurts me. I sweep my desk clean in a fury of activity, but this is followed by a period during which a terminal moraine of letters, memoranda and things I meant to read slowly forms. The Veblen manuscript must have vanished at one of those times when I had a handy open fireplace and an impulse to start life all over again.

happiness went back to her school days. She would not have agreed with that warm friend of hers who said that not all Veblen's books could compensate for a single year of Ellen Veblen's shattered life.

Her life was not wholly shattered. She spoke composedly and proudly of Veblen. No one could take from her the companionship she had enjoyed with him during his formative years. In a way she had collaborated in the making of his books. He would be remembered a long time, and she, who had been his wife, would have a share in that remembering.

I left California in 1919. I never saw Mrs. Veblen after that. She died in 1926.

When I think of my meetings with Veblen in later years I get a series of disconnected pictures. I think these pictures belong in this narrative, if only because in my mind the real Veblen was always the Veblen of Cedro Cottage, and in the later years, more often than not in vain, I was looking for that Veblen. I have said that I believe he was happiest at Cedro. I do not think he was happy in his later years. One reason for this (and I do not maintain that it was the only reason) was that circumstances and persons tried to turn him into a reformer, a role for which he was utterly unfitted. He was at his best when he criticized human society, not when he tried to mend it.

In 1918 the old Chicago *Dial*, a philosophical and literary magazine of venerable but declining pretensions, had been polished up and brought to New York to serve as a vehicle for some of the Veblenian ideas. When I came to New York in March, 1919, I was asked to join the staff, which I did on a part-time basis. For some months I contributed editorials and reviews, and saw a little of Veblen.

Distinguished personalities floated around that office, and hopes of success rose high. I shall not speak of the distinguished personalities, but only of Veblen. The hopes of success, which he may or may not have shared, have a certain pathos now. Veblen and his associates believed that the first World War had set in motion economic and social forces which could not be arrested. It had demonstrated the enormous productivity of modern industry. Had not this country, for instance, carried on a prodigiously costly military venture abroad and at the same time raised rather than lowered its civilian standard of living? Indeed, it had. Did

this not prove the old moral of the mud-hole parable—that productivity was in normal times artificially restricted? Had not the time come for that sort of nonsense to stop? And wouldn't people in general understand all this and do something about it?

Veblen was a prophet now: a prophet sitting in a chair, in front of a white marble fireplace in which no fire burned, a prophet usually saying nothing. Some of his younger disciples were wild with enthusiasm. One of them told me that Veblen had predicted that within five years New York City would lose half its population, since there was no economic justification for its current size or mode of existence. Men would live in spacious places and work, at most, four hours a day. Every one was going over Jordan and into the Promised Land.

But Veblen? I don't know. I have purposely refrained from re-reading what he wrote at that time. I don't think he believed in these fairy tales. He knew as well as any man that poverty in this modern world was not necessary, but he also knew about the toughness of institutions. I don't think he wanted to initiate a revolution or to take part in one. I think he mostly wanted to speculate about the human race and its curious ways and means, and let some one else start and operate the revolutions. He wasn't easy in the role that was thrust upon him. I am certain that there were many times when he would have liked to hitch Beauty to the cart and go up into the hills, and not necessarily with a woman along. Because there were women among his entourage—intellectual women who talked back—and frequently they annoyed him.

I saw him at Amherst in July, 1919. I think this was the weekend conference at which Walter Stewart, Isador Lubin, Walton Hamilton and Leo Wolman were present.<sup>1</sup> I was there to listen, with a view to doing some writing later on. The project was to obtain a grant from the Inter-Church World Movement "to make

<sup>1</sup> These names were well known twenty years later. I think Isador Lubin came nearest to starting a revolution. He did this in the legal and orderly performance of his duties as chief of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the course of which he publicized the plight of the least fortunate "one third of the nation." That simple phrase did as much as anything to promote the campaign for social security.

a thorough analysis of economic conditions."<sup>2</sup> No one close to Veblen had any doubt as to what such an analysis would show. It would document *The Theory of Business Enterprise* and *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, and bring them down to date. When the facts were presented people would act upon them, possibly through a new political party. By the year 1943 at the latest we should all be living in an economy of plenty.

It was not an ignoble dream. I had reached Amherst by going from Grand View, New York, by way of the Erie Railroad, spending a night in a New York hotel, and then taking a tedious daytime trip the next morning. I had another tedious trip back to Grand View. But it was worth while. My imagination expanded. So, as far as I could judge, did every one's. Veblen had his new wife's children with him, and though she was already in a sanitarium because of the nervous breakdown which preceded her death a year later, he seemed happy with them, and almost contented. He talked more than I had ever heard him, except during those occasionally fruitful evenings at Cedro.

It really seemed to all of us, I believe, as though something might be done, and as though an era of the rational use of human and material resources were about to begin. The drunken twenties and the hungry thirties were not foreseen. And no one could have dreamed then of the sinister counter-revolution that was already taking shape in Germany, and would produce the bloody forties. I didn't, anyhow. It was lovely and peaceful up there at Amherst, with summer coming in. It looked like a good conspiracy. But it failed. The money couldn't be found, and there were other reasons.

I am not sure that an inquiry into economic conditions, accompanied by suggestions for their improvement, would have done much good, even with Veblen to inspire it. I suspect he himself doubted, though he certainly played with the idea. The dawning of a new Age of Reason could be visualized at Amherst and a few other quiet places; but Veblen was hardly the man to accept reason as the main agency in determining human conduct. In his

<sup>2</sup> Dorfman, p. 435.

soul he may have known that what we were in grave danger of getting into was an age of unreason.

During the winter of 1919-20 my wife and I lived with friends on East Ninety-second Street, Manhattan, in one of those old houses which perfectly mirrored the physical and mental habits of a past generation: kitchen and dining-room a little below street level, with a small fenced-in yard at the rear; drawing-room and parlor, as I suppose they were called, on the floor above; large, comfortable bedrooms for the master and his family on the floor above that; small, uncomfortable ones further up for the hired help. We lived in a mildly Bohemian style, with no living-in servant, and took turns with the cooking and dishwashing. Once some one hung some washing near one of the upper front windows, and an indignant lady telephoned from across the street to ask that it be taken down, because it was lowering the tone of the neighborhood.

Our friend and legal landlady was undergoing temporary widowhood. Her husband, a lawyer, was in Washington helping the government close out war contracts. We and her young and gay sister, her sister's friends and our friends did our best to keep her cheered up, and this situation resulted in frequent tea parties. To one of these we succeeded in luring Veblen, and with him his faithful disciple, my college mate, Leon Ardzrooni. My wife remembers Veblen as he looked when she opened the door to let him in. He surprised her by being reasonably talkative. I have no explanation for this latter fact, except that he probably always talked more to women than to men.

What surprises me, as I look back, is that he came at all, though he did find sympathetic listeners for whatever he cared to say. What he did say I can't remember. I am sure he must have been impressed by the faded Victorian splendor of that house, which, in its modest way, had once represented conspicuous expenditure. The original owners must have been comfortable rather than rich, but they had laid it on as thick as they could afford. A nice final touch was that the edifice was lighted by gas. Electricity had penetrated the wilds of Nevada and Ethiopia but not, at that time, that section of New York City. Veblen must have had a friendly feeling

for us, to have come there at all. I like to think of him being there, though I cannot bring back the picture clearly.

Another picture is all too clear—the dismal one of Veblen at lunch with his colleagues of the New School for Social Research. The situation that day was about as bad as it could be. Veblen was plainly out of sorts. Perhaps his classes were falling off and other things going wrong. He didn't eat much and didn't appear to like what he did eat. The conversation (in which I was a listener, not a participant) seemed to me both brilliant and profound. A philosopher was present, and he performed until I was beyond my depth of comprehension—but happy in the knowledge that I was being deluged with wisdom.

But Veblen's face throughout wore an expression of deep gloom, almost of despair. Nothing aroused him, or stirred more than a flicker of interest. In an unfortunate moment I ventured some inconsequential remark, addressed directly to him in the form of a question. I should have known better. I think I tried to flatter him a little. Some one had to, I thought. He signified that he had heard, but made no audible reply.

I felt like a fool (properly so, no doubt), yet one could not take Veblen personally when he was in this mood. He was not resenting what any one said. He was resenting the world. He was resenting himself. One felt not only the old detachment with which we at Cedro had been familiar, but a withdrawal into some private depth of woe.

A happier recollection is that of having dinner with him, at Ardzrooni's invitation, in the old Columbia University Faculty Club—a small wooden building not to be confused with the Roman splendors of its present-day successor. It seemed like a retreat, it was informal and dowdy, and I liked it. So, I think, did Veblen. And no one could be too much depressed in Ardzrooni's presence. He was short, burly, dark-skinned, dark-haired and could look extremely ferocious. Possibly he could the more easily understand Veblen's stranger's-eye-view of American society because he himself had been reared in an Armenian colony in the San Joaquin Valley of California, and was therefore slightly detached and frequently amused. He had a keen sense of fun, and his loyalty to

Veblen was so unmistakable that he could even be irreverent. I think he made Veblen smile more often than any one else ever did—any man, at any rate.

Veblen's stiffness wore off during dinner, and was almost gone when we went to Ardzrooni's room to talk. I saw then the first signs of mellowing in him, a relinquishment of struggle, an acceptance of his fate. He let Ardzrooni talk—and Ardzrooni talked well. He let me ask questions, which he sometimes answered and sometimes left to Ardzrooni to answer. I think Ardzrooni was hopeful at the time, and Veblen not so much so, that the mud-hole scheme of economics was on the wane. Veblen would assent with a gentle smile when Ardzrooni became prophetic, and sometimes he would drop a caustic comment. He could see the humor of "normalcy," of the word itself, and of the poor, blundering presidential accident who had popularized it. But the shock and illusion of the war were so recent that I don't suppose even Veblen realized the horrific possibilities of this revolution in reverse. Or maybe he braced himself against it, looked back over the countless centuries of which his anthropological studies made him keenly aware, and resigned himself for a long wait.

The roar of traffic came in from the street, and I found myself thinking of Cedro and of the differences that time and space had created. This city violated my instinct for order. It bothered me. I couldn't find security, peace or direction in it. I wondered if it annoyed Veblen, and in what way. Not in my way, I imagined. If he had had the vitality of his earlier years it might not have annoyed him at all. But his vitality was visibly waning. He was beginning to understand that his own work was nearly done.

After this it was several years before I saw Veblen again. This time it was in company with Will Camp, in Berkeley, California. It is pleasant for me to remember this meeting, for this time Veblen thawed out, and we spoke quite freely of the old days at Cedro. He evidently liked to talk about them. He had met my brother in New York some time before, and had recalled the night when we caught a skunk in a trap we had set for rats in the attic of the Cedro cabin. As William says, we knew it was a skunk, right away, without going up to look. William killed the unfortunate

little creature with great circumspection and a long piece of iron pipe. Veblen laughed about that episode.

In Berkeley he still looked like the Veblen of Cedro. His hair was plentiful, hair and beard were brown, and his high cheek bones emphasized the firm contours of his face. Only his numerous wrinkles, very fine about the eyes, told of his age—he was nearing seventy.

Something I said—perhaps I asked about his plans for the future—made him smile mournfully. “I am older than I look,” he said. Some pride mingled with the sadness.

I bade him good-bye. It was for the last time. I did not see him again, and in 1929 he died. He died when all the elements in American life that he had so brilliantly exposed, so mercilessly stripped and held up to scorn, were riding high and handsome. They were triumphant, and he, in the light of what was happening, was the failure. The market was booming, but his own stock, the increment of lonely thinking, was low.

Looking back, I have to ask myself whether I exaggerate the significance of the Cedro period in Veblen's life for the simple and natural reason that this was when I happened to see most of him. There is no satisfactory answer to such a question. I can only state, or restate, my theory. I have referred to Veblen's split life: the life of a cool (not cold) intellect, which was all that most casual observers saw in him; and the life of the emotions, which few ever saw. Obviously he had his emotions, and it is my belief that there was something in the surroundings at Cedro that eased his emotional strain and gave him a sense of peace during an otherwise trying stage of his life—and, indeed, what stage of life did he pass through that was not trying?

And here, obviously, I am again attempting to find words for something that has been eluding me ever since I began to write this narrative—the personality of Cedro. Possibly the very effort is absurd. Veblen would say it was. How can soil, grass, shrubbery, trees and a house have a personality apart from those of the occupying humans?

Of course they can't have. I once met a man in California, in a shack on a lonesome bleak hill above the sea, and he said that the California Indians used to believe that trees had souls; and he or another man suggested that this might, in fact be the case. I will not outrage Veblen's memory by saying that he once lived in a place where trees, or bushes, or houses were sentient. What I mean about Cedro is that the pattern of buildings, trees, bushes and land, the vistas, the smells, the isolation did affect people who lived there. There were many places in the California of the early 1900's—places which busy, this-worldly persons had either over-

looked or looked at and passed on—which had this quality. And I suppose they can still be found.

There were two influences at Cedro. One was Cedro itself—and the air that moved across it, the rain that fell upon it, the sun and stars that shone upon it. And there was Veblen. Cedro was mystical. Veblen, decidedly, was not. He hated the very word. It stood, he maintained, for man's ignorance of and misinterpretation of nature. The farmer had it, to the extent that he could not control nature. The mechanic lacked it, to the extent that he could control nature.

But there Cedro was, and there was this quality about it. It was a kind of suspended action, of pause, of waiting without tension, of activity going by without intruding, of a purely temporary changelessness. My father's death, Harry George's illness, did not alter it. If these things had to happen they were less terrible there than they would have been elsewhere.

Cedro was healing. It healed the shock of death. It made up for the lack of a good many things that young men expect to have, and which the three young men I have written about didn't have. It was a small world for twenty, twenty-two, twenty-seven years of age. It wouldn't have served for more than a year. But it was a world from which one went out stronger and more assured—and God knows one needed to be such, even in those halcyon days, before two wars.

Did Veblen find it healing, too? Physically I think it was that for him. I doubt that he ever enjoyed as buoyant health after his Cedro period as he did during it. He had a bodily vigor that had entirely vanished when I saw him again, more than a decade later. He had reached a plateau. The books that stated his basic philosophy and expressed his general attitudes had been written. By these he would be remembered. He would never startle any one again. But he still had this energy, and he was still filling in gaps. He was rounding out the Veblen's-eye-view of the universe. This didn't tire him. It stimulated him. It was when people tried to make something else of him, something in their images rather than his, that he grew tired—and the bounce went out of him.

Cedro, and to some extent Stanford University, gave Veblen a

setting in which he could work. I haven't measured his productivity during the Stanford years, page by page, with that of earlier or later years. Work isn't always set down on pages, even by those whose impulse it is to write. Sometimes it is done inside the head, and at the moment gets no further.

But Cedro was more than a background, even for Veblen. He didn't romanticize it. He had no sentimental love for nature. What he had was a kind of amused tolerance. He got on well with nature, as he got on with children, cats and horses. He didn't respect it as he did the best work of workmanlike human hands. He regarded it, I believe, as something that hadn't grown up, and perhaps never would grow up—never ought to grow up, maybe. But if you had asked him, and he had been in a mood to reply, I also believe that he would have replied as he did about the capitalist system, that it had at least one virtue, it worked.

Perhaps, still more deeply, he had a peasant oneness with the earth, a kind of partnership, stripped of all superstition, but real. He could work with it better than he could with men. The whole burden of his thinking is that men did not work with it as they might. He saw them diverted and enfeebled by habits and institutions. In his essay on *The Instinct of Workmanship*, published in 1898, he had written that man has distanced his competitors in the animal kingdom "long ago and by so wide an interval that he is now able, without jeopardy to the life of the species, to play fast and loose with the spiritual basis of its survival." You will not find the word *spiritual* very often in Veblen's books, but it did exist in his vocabulary and in his thoughts. And I believe that, in the meaning in which he used the word in the phrases I have quoted, he found a spiritual quality in nature.

So I think that Cedro was, in a way, and temporarily, a sort of Garden of Eden for Veblen, as it was, in another way, for the young men who shared it with him that year. Not having made it, he didn't feel the responsibility for it that God felt for the original Garden. But he walked in it in the cool of the evening—and in the cool of his own evening.

And how did we three seem to him, we who were left after my father died and the Wilson-Baker family had withdrawn? I think,

maybe, in his sight, we belonged in the Garden, too. We were immature, and no doubt amusing, and so we fitted in. He made no conscious effort to turn us into disciples, though he may have hoped we would be. Perhaps he studied our ways from an anthropological point of view. Unlike the Cedro poultry, we did not revert to nature, but our digressions from the norm of undergraduate behavior may have had its interests for him. I don't think we would figure largely in his reminiscences if he had been the sort of man who writes them, but we might have been a footnote. He was not that sort of man. He went so far as to request that no memoir, no biography, nothing, be written about him after his death. Of course he was wrong in this. If a man desires not to be written about he should take care not to be worth writing about. That will provide anonymity for most of us.

I might bring forward, if necessary, still another reason, or excuse, for writing of him. A part of myself stems from Cedro, and therefore from Veblen. A man who leaves his mark on others must expect them to be curious about him and, if they write, to write about him. I cannot say precisely what the Veblen mark is. I did learn from him to examine human institutions and to some extent human motives with a measure of scepticism, though I should not call myself a sceptic. I learned to think in terms of a changing, not a static society. And this was well for me. The tides of change were running faster and faster even while we were leading our idyllic life at Cedro. The surf was beating like thunder beyond the barrier reef of our island. One needed some preparation and forewarning to ride that surf. Veblen gave us some.

I learned, too, to respect workmanship. And by workmanship I mean, and I think Veblen meant, all work, humble or ambitious, demanding a little skill or all the power of genius, done with the hands or done with the head, that men do for the work's sake. It is a thing all good workmen understand, and in it they are brothers.

I see this quality, this instinct, in every job well and truly done: in good buildings, and in their architects, construction superintendents and foremen, in the men running along the steel beams, in the carpenters, tile-setters, painters and plumbers, in the men who wash their windows and the women who mop their floors. I

see it in some types of business men and not in others, in some labor leaders and not in others—and these distinctions are important to those who seek a middle way between the tyranny of government and the tyranny of private groups.

I know that no ship successfully crosses an ocean without workmanship at the helm and on the bridge; no transport plane makes its proper field safely without it; no physician keeps the oath he made at graduation time; no garage mechanic does right by a car; no farmer is worthy of his land; no dancer, actor or musician can keep his soul alive; no newspaperman, working against the deadline, can respect himself—not one unless, whatever else he is, he is a workman consecrated to his work. Nor any elected statesman, nor any commander of armies, nor any man whose trade is shining shoes.

I think Veblen might acknowledge workmanship shining through this dreadful business of war: in the man in the bombing-plane making his calculations under fire; in the artillery observer giving the range for the guns; in the naval officer ready to take over command of ship and fleet when the captain and the admiral are struck down by his side; in the anti-aircraft gunner braced back behind his inadequate shield, taking careful aim; in the tank driver, pounding through hell; in the first-aid man attending to the wounded while the shells are falling; in the skippers and crews of merchant ships in the danger zones.

When the guns are silent, when emotions are stilled a little and the sound of men's thoughts can again be heard, it may be that on this foundation we shall build a happier, a more just civilization. It can support the most prodigious structure that free men can erect. If I could ask Veblen now, in his far place, whether this is true or not he would reply—I can see him and hear him almost as plainly as ever—that he didn't know. But some of the faith I have comes from him,<sup>1</sup> and now I thank him for it.

<sup>1</sup>I say some of my faith because I cannot determine what is Veblen in it, what is derived from Stanford's presiding genius in my time, David Starr Jordan, and what came from Fremont Older, my first editor and for eight years my patient teacher. Veblen was Veblen. Jordan was a great-hearted liberal, in some ways a poet, a notable scientist—and he did not value Veblen when the pinch came and Veblen's presence at Stanford was an impediment to him. Older was a highly emotional

So it is over. The story is finished. The black months that saw my father's death and Harry George's final exile are done with, the golden months that had in them so much healing, so much learning and growing, so much peace. I have lived them for the second time. And the last time. The memory of Cedro will go with me to the end of my days, equally with the memory of the green hills where I was born and first went to school, but though the buildings may stand and the foothills will outlast the time of man and the fogs above them will never rest in their coming and going, nor ever be long away, yet Cedro is not there any more. I cannot return to it again.

And yet I can . . .

The Professor sits at his end of the table. Tonight he is going to talk. Harry George chokes slightly on his sonnabitch and looks embarrassed, but death is not in his thoughts just now. William, on my right, at the other end of the table from the Professor, settles back comfortably, young and earnest. Something as yet unspoken brings a slow smile to Veblen's face. We hold our breath. One question, one abrupt sound or motion, and maybe Veblen will close up like an abalone on a rock. We are quiet, and he doesn't.

American workingmen don't sing, he says. He wonders why. We don't know and wouldn't venture to tell him if we did. Once he was walking down a road in Belgium, he goes on, just before dark, and he met a group of laborers coming up the road abreast and singing at the top of their voices. I don't remember any more. But there was this evening, and these words came out of it. Something led up to them and something followed them. The waves of all the days wash over them. But that evening we were quiet and attentive, and he talked.

We three are in the kitchen afterwards, Harry George limping around and thinking up new and outrageous ways of describing my character, habits and personal appearance, William leaning

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crusader, torn between his love of humanity and his doubts as to whether it was worth loving. I learned much from each. And I learned from a Negro named Sam, whose last name I have forgotten, and from others with whom I did manual labor.

against the table and feeling free and easy because most of his work was done in the morning and he is off duty now.

I am still sleeping in the tent. We all start for bed. Harry and I say good night to William as we pass the cabin. Harry teaches me some words of English slang, which I am instructed never to address to an Englishman unless I want my block knocked off, repeats a little from *The City of Dreadful Night*, and identifies a constellation for me. One of us drowses off while the other is still talking—Harry or I, sometimes one, sometimes the other.

I wake in the night and hear the coyotes yelping. There is a gentle stir of air and there are mysterious fragrances. I hear a soft, distant step on the gravel. The Professor is brooding over his Eden by night.

Perhaps, some day, they *will* sing.

It is good to be at Cedro. I fall asleep again.

THE END











This enchanting picture of a casual, idyllic life in an eccentric household, and of a lost world of youth, contains some of the most utterly charming writing which Mr. Duffus, well known critic of the *New York Times*, has ever done.

Mr. Duffus says: "I long ago resolved that I would never write anything in the autobiographical line. But I haven't been able to help it. I undertook these memoirs because I thought there might be some interest in the personality of Thorstein Veblen as it revealed itself to a nineteen-year-old boy who lived in his household for a year: the fruitful year of 1907-8, at Cedro Cottage, near Stanford University. Some other elements appeared as the story progressed, but Veblen is this book's reason for being. He was a great economist, a devastating iconoclast, a satirist whose dissections of early twentieth century civilization will remain as sources of delight and edification for many years to come."

Yet, fascinating as is the light Mr. Duffus throws on Veblen's character, Veblen is only one feature of the book. Harry George, for example, who also spent part of that magic year at Cedro, is a provocative and sympathetic personality; and the adjustment of the two Duffus boys—especially of the future memorialist, fresh and green from Vermont and never hired twice by wise employers—is instinct with lively comedy. There is tragedy, too: in the Scotch father, broken in health by his trade of granite cutting, who was willing to make any sacrifice for his two sons to get through college; and in Harry George, laughing in the face of his own doom. But it is the laughter, the loyalty, and the dreams that are mostly remembered.

Robert L. Duffus was born in Waterbury, Vermont. He received his A.B. and A.M. degrees from Stanford University, his LL.D. from Middlebury College, was an editorial writer for the *San Francisco Bulletin* and *New York Globe*, and for some years reported on the American scene for the *New York Times Magazine* and various other periodicals.

He has been a member of the editorial staff of the *New York Times* since 1937.

Mr. Duffus now lives in Westport, Connecticut. He says he prefers a New England small town to New York or any other city—at least during the summer. He knows Vermont well, and chose it as the setting for his novels "That Was Alderbury" and "Victory on West Hill." He is also the author of a biography, "Lillian Wald: Neighbor and Crusader."

The experiences recorded in the present book center upon the college year of 1907-8, when Mr. Duffus and his brother William M. Duffus lived as working students in the household of Thorstein Veblen, near the Stanford campus.

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